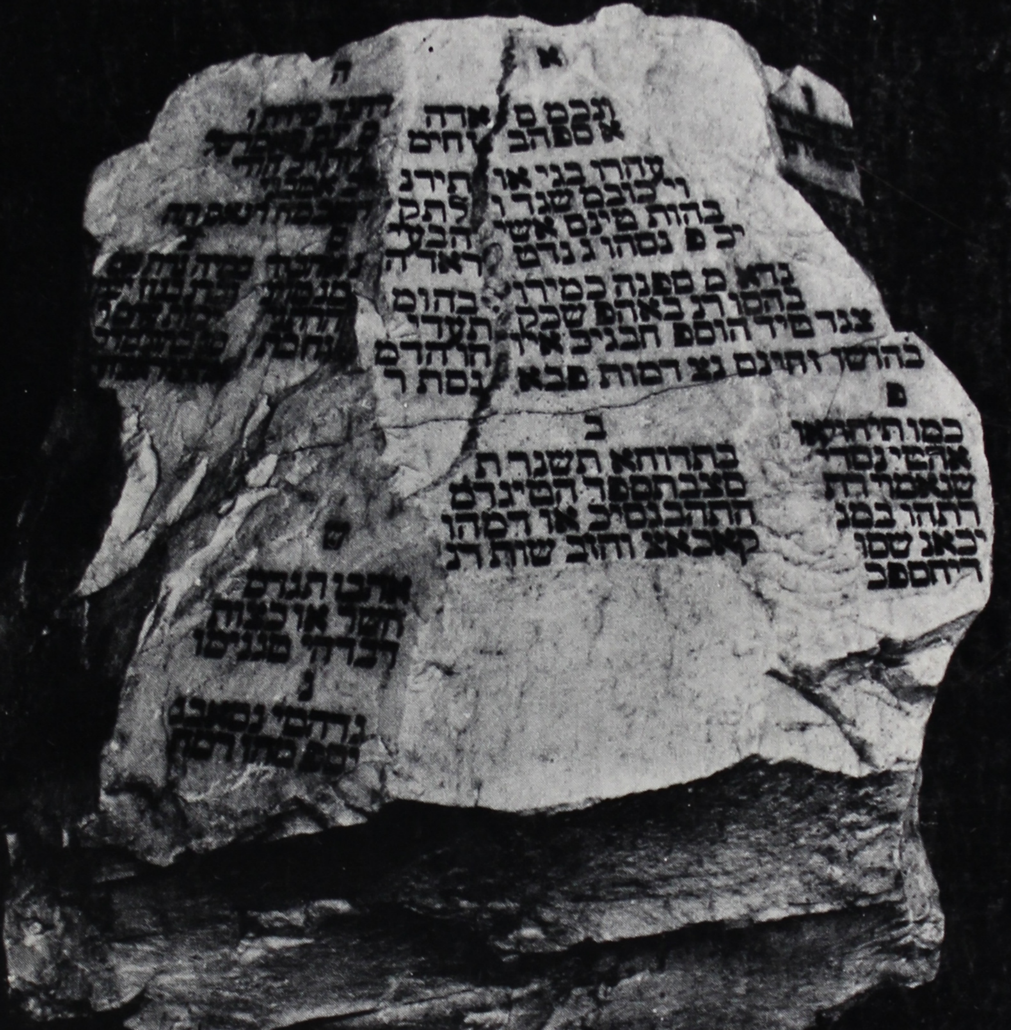
Caterpillar 14



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Caterpillar 14

January 1971

Robert Kelly: FIRE FAMINE 2
red painting from Medicine Rapids, Saskatchewan 6
Kenneth Irby: SOME MORNING MUSIC FRAGMENTS 7
Clayton Eshleman: THE OVERCOATS OF EDEN 9
Michael Palmer: (9 poems 14
Jack Hirschman: THE VISION OF THE BLACK 20
Elaine Edelman: THE GOOD GOOD FRIENDS 24
Theodore Enslin: SYNTHESIS Part III 26
Brian McInerney: (7 poems 49
Fielding Dawson: ROOTS & BRANCHES 54
David Bromige: "Dear Night" 56
Stan Brakhage: CARL THEODORE DREYER 58
William Lane: THREE FOR D. H. 73
Robert Kelly: COMMENTARY ON BUSONI'S OPERA DOKTOR FAUST 76
names: 83
Thomas Meyer: THE UMBRELLA OF AESCULAPIUS 84
Wallace Berman: 114
Kenneth Irby: (PARTS OF A POEM FOR MAX DOUGLAS) 118
Diane Wakoski: TO AN AUTOCRAT 123
Brief Notes: 125
Allen Ginsberg: BLAKE NOTES 126
Robert Creeley: FOR BETSY AND TOM 133
Rochelle Nameroff: KINESIS, CONTAGION 134
Robert Kelly: THE HAT 136
Clayton Eshleman: THE GOLDEN STRING 140
Carl Thayler: A CHICAGO POEM HAVING LITTLE TO DO WITH THE CHIPPEWA 142
Stan Brakhage's Correspondence with The Museum of Modern Art 143

front cover: Topanga Seed by Wallace Berman

Robert Kelly:

FIRE FAMINE

& crowd on the heat .
the Magus hides the
town's fire
& where he hides it

is in the hand of her heart,
right, her cold

temple of untried lusts
pillared with pink marble,
Vesta's .

God's sharp angle cuts her down.

It's better than swampland or Shakespeare,
better than tricking her on boggy ground

where lumps of love's iron grow
a foot below the grass, size of quail eggs,

l'Anse au Meadows, first entry to her ground,
Artemis, yare shapely thighs
she always moves, undone clothes, gracile

but is reluctant to be seen as dance

although she gets her feet on everything
& is inward with the wood .

petal . carpel . lure
her back to life
as what she kills comes back to life
wearing her horns,
dances among her followers,
takes it place . Troupeau .
Last scent of perfume
pressed in the paper, a promise,
honor it,
the year rolls back again,
kill time.

The arrow
is borrowed.

By herself
she'd have to run them down,

the arrow
delivers her

dance into
motionless.

Only the arrow moves,
it seeks

speaks.
Deer . I name I kill you.

That is the kind of precision the holy
forest spells leaf by leaf.

*

Call the Mouth the Place of Suffering.
Toothache's only part of it.
I mean the bite,
muscles that clamp down & shape the lips,

show where the passionate endure their energies
& the passive put up with what happens.

*

how could the bartender not remember her he said
since she sat there naked ordering b&bs

actually she wore her boyfriend's lilac shirt
you could see through it you could see what she meant.

*

Such precision. I mean every arrow
loosed at a sure mark. I mean the steady
trend of that kind of woman
to imagine every goal an ultimate.

The taxidermist
was our first sentimentalist

& the next had a bum heart
so hung a tiny silver heart up

over the altar of Artemis or Apollo
offering fair exchange,
                                        heart for heart

Sentiment is merchandise.

Stuffed animal. Stuffed heart. Silver rings & gold keys
& the actual woman shivering by the altar

while all the priests confuse their symbols
she waits for someone to make sense of her condition
while all the men are away at the endless war

*

Plough the field is no excuse.
Agriculture is evasion.
Take care of her because for lack of her
you lose all roads to heaven. Remember heaven?
up there, above the sunflower, beyond the mesa.

Good morning does not mean rice.
Beyond the cup
                        of even the most eloquent
dream-laden
                    trumpet of the morning glory
there is a cup

so long proposed

still brimming

since everything leads up to it, fills it
& it's your turn, my turn at last to drink.

*

When we get time
the right way round

we trace the arrow's course
back to bow

& come upon her,
she is naked with instruction

& her hand at the quiver
is not different.

*

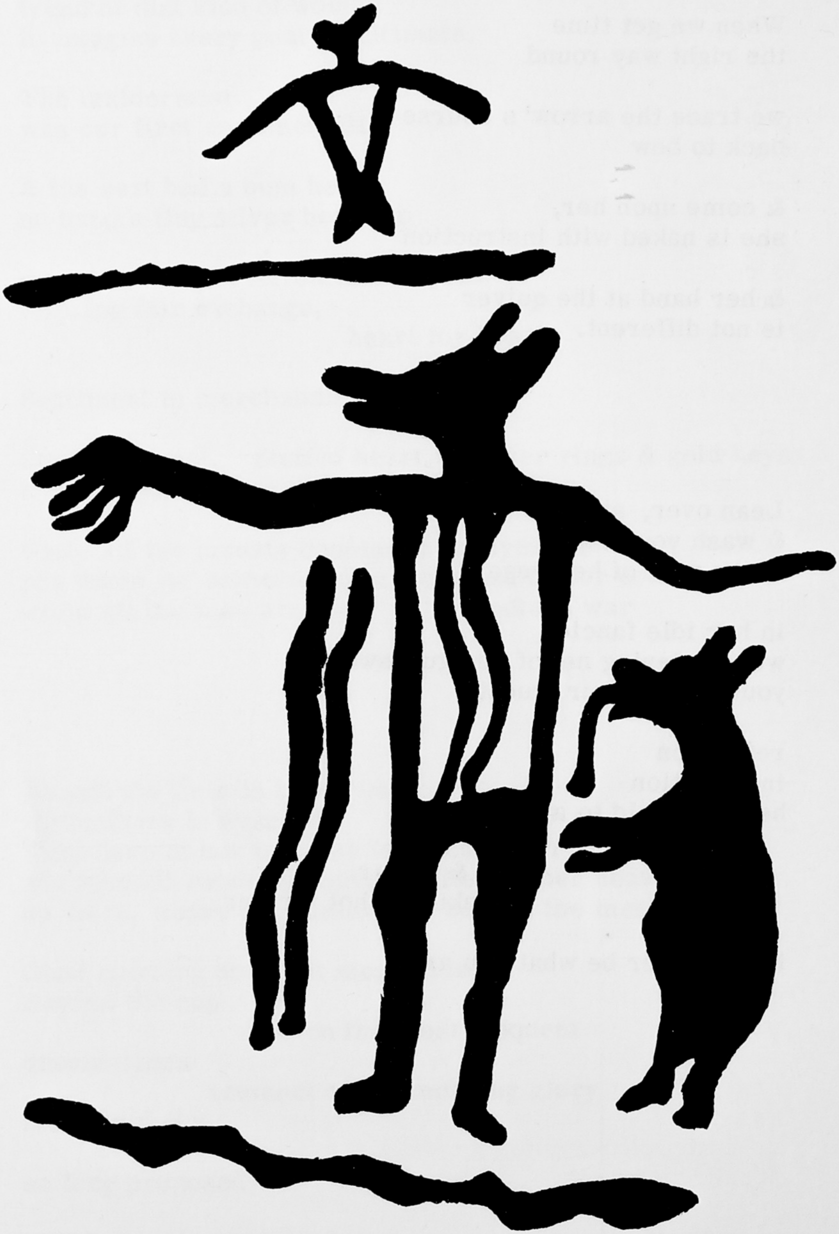
Lean over, star,
& wash your face
in the pool of her regard

in her idle fancies
wet glistening net of her guesswork
you'll read your truest

reflection
information
her soul sold to a star

& a star
making it hot for her

to make her be what you are.



Kenneth Irby: SOME MORNING MUSIC FRAGMENTS

Indian summer in Berkeley means
the summer fogs come back in October
these days a chill
that is not in the heart
from bed to standing up to hands up to the weather
up hitching to work
a runner of warmth gurgles in the head
out to the extremities of land
where the toes and fingers wiggle
there is a long old travel more than every day
embedded just precisely here in every day
ants follow intensely in the house
a track across the table in the coffee house
an intimacy with redwoods only fog brings
mapping discovery, Cascadia before this continent
rising again from the covering waters
across my palm

confusions of the morning
are blessings that the house protects

*

on the surrounding rock the bear shaman and his bear erect
summon the surrounding waters: Come back again, lap here once
[more
bring salmon to flip again with paw out of the descending rivers
overhead the thunderbird wings for rain
far more than ever rain before, his snake of lightning and descent
straightens out beneath his claws, parallel with the shaman's
snake of water in the ground flat beneath his feet
the master's left arm handless out almost touches the bear's stiff
[ears
drawing from that head and lolling tongue
sweat, piss, and the sweet, thick fluids of the spine and brain
the right hand without a thumb, no grip, no opposition visible
supplicates on off the stone despite the haughty upturned Anubis
[head
beneath his elbow leap straight up and side by side
twin snakes, his messengers below the earth and to the opposite
[poles

*

these are the shakers
in his hand someone saw the distances
the lines and the waters
let's say a chisel eye, a pecker
full of paint

into his the bear spirit came
not a dance
but a grip so hard it stamped its picture in the rock
and turned it red

*

the god of wanderings
lies inside
                    it's Jed Smith's
"novelty of the thing" not his Methodist
religion or his family

inside, under old strata
of the brain, pools
under the continent
before this continent

still waters in the still
shifting magmas
steam, blind, cold
and stony with the throw
                                        old gods Hart Crane
knew dark under the Ozarks
pool at the pit of the brain
                                          oblongata

*

the change of weather felt
by changes in the moisture of the air, is felt
on the skin beneath the skin, the true
or inner dermis

. . .

--- 15 Oct 70

Clayton Eshleman:

THE OVERCOATS OF EDEN

In less than the pulsation of an artery it
is altered --
where you were was suddenly
not-- you stood
by her tub
her word to you
you allowed, put
you in Eden--
you entered not
to free her, but for
company--
knowing you were dead you wanted you
picked her up you
danced with her you
thought not of freeing her nor
yourself you
longed to get one
thing straight
you
saw the possibility of
a poem, you
danced with her you
demanded to pick her up
(pick him up) you
demanded to speak with
the King (the
Queen) You told her
the greatest thing can
happen between us is

a child She told you (He
No, its Us (She
actually, then: orgasm is
the best thing can happen
between us,
jogging in Max's
Kansas City you
shouting No
its a child She No

its an orgasm
                                You
walked her home

You walked,
her home.   She
(He
walked
beside you (You
invited you' re In
now in this filthy
(the red rags around
her (His
legs, 30
feet under ground
a little bowl placed
under the bars were
rice, you ate that thinking,
you wanted to masturbate in
her, That
She (He
said was alright (So she
ate His cock there A
servant it seemed placed
strangled by your ear
Loosed jetty

the dream opened
a summer house with
all your relatives were
Grand Central Station on
the porch your father as
you rummaged at her
clothes, delightful moustache
40, the age at which you
are born, Come on in
(at the rim of the bathtub
morning What do you do
when you are alone?
                                        Why I
masturbate (entered in that word
the roundhouse of all the peoples of
the earth refracted of
course 50 prisms say, visible
reunion (stuck
with the balls & streamers, but
Then He taking you thru the Aunts

& Uncles to

Your Mother! What sweetness now!
How lovely to have life moving at
the gait of the poem! That seemed
your mother (He disappeared
sprung upon you as your life
with the other relatives (Esh
leman Little Ash Tree outside
And then my mother & I, she
now in her motherform, were in back
yard under the familytree summer
here winter Adrienne now Caryl
Our conversation is a lovely fucking
I mean my mother was a spider
We were going up & down in her
(His web She (not
how to instruct me (
blank shot the pride
blaze but that's ok
you're in the only place you'll
ever be its personal I mean its
sexual the tree that curves before
You just can't step outside this or
the tree is America---O
that's what you were telling me O
this tree with the bathtub in its roots
Is what happens when I walk down the street
What street your head This son is
What I wanted to tell you Adrienne
Ariadne but since you can hear me its
not just a dream & my mother & I were
Under my voice it rolls along my feet
Thru the ground Is there a distinction
She, was asking, Do you (He
understand now We'd better go back
Daddy wonders where we are
(but the bright gladiators I cautioned
Here, you can touch it, that's
fury, you'd just better rip up that sheet
You're drunk now in the heart of the poem
But I was just walking down (He
was off talking to the relatives (The
Relatives, the Puns, What fun so I
did that little wincing walk down the aisle
splashing & splashing & splashing Was
it just you wanted to see your Father &
(Him, No I wanted (He

ah, to live a little Not be locked out
Ah we'd better go back your Daddy's
a drunk boat roacking & roacking
ok---my pain is about done I'll die soon so
We'd better go back to Him (red cloth
but is that my father a piece of shit (She
now lost under (He was talking Aunt Ivy
I mean Uncle Charles how beautiful Indiana
outside of America is (the chains on Angela
Davis like a campus lies of course you want
She's a part of you (I wonder How father did
you know her (well I was sick at 18 then I
started to play the trumpet O
I understand now how you feel No
wonder we're under the bannister
its ok to get inside like this without
surface, ah they are gonna be awful mad
at you talking like this, I know dad, but
this was how our talk was you know you
never spoke to me I know the poem is only
inside, (He What you wanta do Split my
Head no this joke is very serious You
Must not blow up the pen
How did we get here Well you fell
Cant we leave now No I have that old
car in which you always wanted to ride
O I thought you were Caryl no just a body you
swear fidelity now? Of course to you since
You're me sleeping but I'm awake Of
course you are you're sitting in this chair
You mean if everybody were to do this Yes
(He ho ho ho (& then Aunt Iva not ivy but ivA
that were your grant him her You won
Jesus my father how nice to taste your seamless
Grant Get in, its an old car a buggy wont
take us Far That's a number Get in
I just wanted to ride a while listen to my
poem sink into its manure O that's (SheWe
weewee rode along little droplets down I
just waking walked with a hardon out of sleep
What do you do when you (bumping down that
countryroad My father & I to get a beer O
yes with Robert & Denis bumping down night
but the town was closed (HeShe absolute
fern wrath overcoats the people in overcoats
They were like trees the Town
the beerhalls closed only little lights
But that's my dream my father said Just

it is Just to ride with you 60 or so years
O well I was turning to Caryl now in Adrienne
Who are they Well you can't now know Since
the Trees of Eden had on overcoats Well
its beautiful you're out of American (O i

9 November 1970
Sherman Oaks

Michael Palmer: (9 poems

A Ring

Do you remember
when I broke the mirror that
time
so that in time
with lighted faces, talking.

Each in her place
as I remember it.

But the words they were
speaking.
I couldn't hear them
caught up as I was
in listening.

One part held an eye
another a raised arm
and she called to her brother
through them.

What was left
of the ring
became a question. Where
had they been all that time.

Or lost sight of
where had they gone.

A rabbit standing there
had the answer.
But he ran so much faster
he got lost in laughter.

And reading in this room
it was the same.
Now the man in the moon

has a name.

# # #

I got up at nine
and the leaves were

brown. What time
is it tonight.

I got down at three
and they were green

what do you mean
'do you want bacon.'

But that was later
with a mashed potato.

# # #

Who turned out the light
and turned it on.
Where is the book
he came from.

Which one. Here is a book
three days long
shaped like a tree
give it to me.

Here is a room
with a broken door.
It lasted a year
the time before.

Here is a finger
turning and turning.
It turned so long
it became a wall.

# # #

Actual memories mostly
the length of an arm;

a social art, things known
written down. This desk

deflects light
to my eyes, tests distance.

A toad in the garden now
dug out from winter's rest

interests cats.
Turning

through a finger
the elm's walls

are ideas, old leaves
apologise. Increasingly

the road
rises toward us

knowing and
womanly, leaning

from a window.

# # #

This is a room.

Give me this and
this. This

book ends some

time when it ends and

this is a room.

# # #

An Alphabet

When it rains each day the sky
turns grey and the water

flows down through the holes
onto the white walls

and wood floors
and over the clothes

and books and the comb
and the curve in the mirror.

And it falls on the woman
sleeping there

with her face hidden and her hair
across both pillows.

And the five-pointed leaves
are yellow and green.

Listen to me, she said,
listen to me.

They walk along and
talk to themselves

and the shoes and
windows and

listen to me
they get back in the tree.

# # #

I trapped a fish
with my naked hand
It was covered with fur
and hard to understand

There was no hook
to shake
or orange birthday cake
like we've all

had to partake of
at one time
or another
This was a fish

without a friend
that met its end
smiling at the dish
Fish with your

yellow sleeves and
rolled up magazine
and open belly
when your eyes

clouded over
you looked like some other
bird
of a different color

# # #

Cats moved into the room
They walk on old shoes

They talk specifically
about They talk about

rabbits and plant life
Cat-talk is a habit

of understanding
The lowest leaves carry

teeth marks
into watery graves

The waves wash over
their yellow faces

Their faces are grey
When the war first came

they return to shore

and wonder if it's Wednesday
or the day before

# # #

The Whale

The whale
A jar disintegrates
or breaks.   I pick up the pieces
of the second voice

And the other pieces
more slowly
since we're leaving
A blue marker

and a rounded Japanese
flower.   The pieces
have almost disappeared
behind the key

I pick up the pieces
of one and three
They fit
like they were made

for it
from a dark liquid
gone hazy at the edge
They fit

Jack Hirschman:

THE VISION OF THE BLACK

The Vision of the Black   body radiation   shot through with colors falling   across
the bent length of the land   scape sporadic with out   bursts of angers and fears
to be beaten back in   to be incited to a riot   of isms and die faceless   scissored
from both sides   the lambs white nightmare   come true to the fact of the act of
the fuck in the film

I will have nothing   whisper to nothing but   hold out my tongue to no one but   the
faint beast who shows me   the wrinkles under his skin between insolences   of hip de-
feat and war loss under the scattered   back and slaving vessel   under the gypsy camp
of the sty of ones own   iridescently razored vision

Here and no where   now and in no time   but this which is nothing   I see fall   with
victory winging their shoulders   black and blue with all   the spectrums attending
with the giddiness of girls who shook us to this   chapel cross where   dwarf yes freak
yes invert perverted   verb of the sodomy of my own incest electric   Oui is reigning
blood   the dark horses of the night go driving through   guitar strings bursting
open fenders giving   birth to the fallopian gods

I take root knowing sitting still   I take root conscious to the tips of   my blackened
fingers so far from and   so afterglowingly yours   every grave accent and circumflexion
a stroke of   a wave of your light   stress of the tressfall let me   these eyelids
in your mouth   taste come upon me read   randomly the spatter of the perfect work

of the fission of in   discretions and outside   the gulls cry apocalypse one enters
by way of sunlight gathered   back to your wrist like   a congregation naturally   of
the ten descents of your wings   to walk the driftwood dead   and oilslick storm
stretching clear to a day   pollinating pure kamasalila all round the lupine oblation
of hills and   basin plashing boys

And I stand in my mind   out of my mind   slightly off slightly   slanted kicksorted
by a master   demonique   juggling sexes like alchemy before science   medi evil and
mediumistic   a rising sun of elephantiasis   in the republic of   a Texans skewer
when she then you then who   is running along   beside me out of the cities   choking
laws through woods and clear   springing edges of true sidelings and violently simple
rills flecked with fishegg eyes beholding   the source at the crown   of the mountains
and down theres so bloated   and doubled for nothing but vains   of fame gold and
junk   in the sinuous eye   baiting this pole   like man waiting for   the son
like woman waiting for the worship   to fish with who has been   with me at elbow
stumbling alone from   shamble to shamble   whirling round standing still   hanging
on to the number that counts down   our zero to the letters that   screwball our head
with unfeelable   facts comprising this distant uptight this   thing that frightens
who what   were we left for   the right of this middle   when the split split   when
the void voided itself   with a cackle of Ka   the cats to clean up   the shit on
the floor   sent from Jerusalem   warning of impending   who who will   come through
the paranoic   teabag this ear wigging ring of alarms   telephonic attacks driving us
out driving the car who is driving within beside   all the way back through   Pacific
street running   with tears and   the sidewalk weeping so sanely   the dwarfs magnified
to giants   lovers lie alone one by one by one   leathery in the moonlight
flooding the walls with the cycles and pistons   of their flight from month to month
a planetary serial music risen from clefts   of the rock which Jerusalem is   you and

I this moment two   minutes to heaven this moment   inside a plum   O lovely transuranic
acid of the tinfoil of our journey   to the cage where my double   throws away
the chocolate bar and eats the silver   blind and deaf and chained   animal animal
depth of the foetal heart lugged back   and stuffed into the uterus of fire   wailing
the paradox of   elemenopee in the corner where   my fling crumples up and lies   a
wrinkled ball a sucked out atom of a   koan answered by the thin shattering window of
my grandmothers   cry

I set myself under   your gaze though I ride your eyes   to the end of their seeing
your ears burst   the drums of the late   afternoon sun   explodes on the sands into
clouds   after the rains compose   suddenly a sky has time   slowly closing on
the jews and its night in here   where this band   age of ohms and electronic   neutrinos
walk thin and hustle the moon   for slivvers of cheese and a foto gravure   and
I turn   no longer a kids whirl but   a spasm or jolt a shock of having been   buzzed
I turn into   a car   go with radio messages   with roads cutting right to the bone
of brains   over the cliff high suicide   wake up to your anaglyphs on my thighs
ebbing and flowing   forever going nowhere   nibbling this cove these inlets
out of the sweet   rot of flesh

No end to the emptying fullness   to the abundant void no beginning   when the man is
whole   sun crowned by the concentration below   and all that fall they fell   upon politic
and sex   pealing to the loneliness of self undressing to be made   unreal and
happy   given back to memorys waves   in the shipwreck of mouth   in the length of the
sprawl of submission   birds fly out of   every chafe a dove   look an arrow shoots up
out of   every angst an angel   we gathered at this   last mouth for   silence and the
moving finger coming   to rest a cross with the lips   deep drinking kingdom

Southern Cross made of yods and the blisters of oriental time in this silk worm woven in the flash and poured full of your limbs cool to cool Ai Ko naked and trembling in the kimono thrown across the stanzas ending where I pick up this house and throw it out the window the gulls going up and down Ai Ai eyelashing the face not yet born and neverendingly what poor what piss sweet honey of a street what kind ferocious eyes meet at the end of the storm come all the way from Texas with essence of You with sensitive pretense of french on the stairwell face of the first who taught my hands how to fill the empty pockets home the torn pants of the heart with poetry mantra of energy which is this matter which this is transformation tipping its breast of sans skrit dervishing into twilight of the ears of woman suppurating in the rainfall and hemmorhage of rice skin turning to stone stone melting to molten river Lingasharira I make for your death living depths deeper than bomb Lingasharira of embryos open eyed to the all womb within and behold the sun and the moon are one around in the strength and the song is JAH the whirl wind of the skirt in the eye of Job burning up the leaves of spring drinking the brotherhood of lice with a swig of leers save for beholding the strength and the song is JAH Lingasharira with dog in the throat with wolf in the prison downtown with palm masterbating the muzzle of a gun with the vomit of a hundred politicians at your bleeding strength and the song is JAH O barrenness of apples scent of the empty garden growing me forever downward through scintilla of idiocy to the simple story of the hand holding the cool seven stars of the weeks tear in the morning glorious minute eyes reading me her spells acting out the birds in the trees between drippling covenants of the last vowels of rain running ever running with a Dada pencil in her hand into the ghettoblond primer where the blue lines and barbed wire spaces are one with the tiny brow wrinkling into the pupil of a music passing sight sound and sleeps wide openly melodious all death long

Elaine Edelman:

THE GOOD GOOD FRIENDS

In the tree, in the top of the tree,
A bird!
My friends can neither hear nor see;
I' ve seen and heard.

In the tree, on the upper branch,
A most marvelous bird
Sings and fills me with desire
Beyond my reach.

My soul grows ravenous, my eyes like arrows,
He is so lovely.
My whole heart draws upon the wish
To leap into the tree.

My poor friends, meanwhile,
On such a hot day,
Still they are kind,
Smiling at me.

Oh, but even the strength now flooding me
Is lack.
I am so small and he
So far away.

Come back tomorrow,
My good friends say,
With ropes and tall ladders
To find your way.

But I, I cannot move myself
Even to gather nets
Without him who claims me, who sets
My peril. I am rooted
In longing.

Come, dear friends, I cry, serve beyond duty.
Bend once, a moment's bending,
Become a living stair
For my ascending.

I climb on their sturdy backs, seeing
Near and more near, the bird.
My friends who've neither seen nor heard
Steady me in the sun.

Who bends to become a stair
Also will be freed.
And the bird
Is mine!

Theodore Enslin:

SYNTHESIS,
Part III

Reasons which become---and are,
in the end, ridiculous.
There are no reasons---
no
will
and
no action willed.
The bend
at the entrance
rises
---full arch---
above/below.
It lets no man in
no man out
(but there is the odd man.
He becomes
odd man out
passes through.
(He may look out upon
a different tree.)
It went beyond a simple dream.

A sadness, - what I see of love.
It is the tree the odd man sees,
and comes no closer to
than seeing.
It is there,
but is a tree
and not for him.
Though, in the darkness,
what is seen may be a tree
between,
and fictive.
Whereof---
a blessing given.
We go in.
The will breaks
as the heart does not.
Some sense of who he is

at verge,
but only as the verge
becomes horizon.
To the craft, a surface,
as the craft
bears
deceives
forms - whole.
A tension -
very/like.
A not-similitude.
How to rise -
how to -
yes
in the dark again.
To know and not to know.
Through others that we suffer,
a guilt of suffering
which becomes our own.
Standing
giddy
at the head of the stairs,
unable to go down.
The door is shut behind them.
To shut out consciousness---
the argument of what it is:
Volition,
or to fly up.

Imagining a way---
a harder mixture than the dream of it.
Breaking/
/casting
forming in sequence
what is no form
inspired.
Impaired - the sense
breaks over the arch
impediment
between the window
the seer
and the seen.
By other means to move there---
by underground reversed
as rule reverses.
We do not sound the darkness.
It sounds us
as

a sound between.
Whose?
            This
who
      who
the - .

It is in the time-standing.
Return to the end of the window.
The niche
            whereof
behind the curtain
water drops that freeze
                                  breaking
pattern falling and opening.
It depends upon the search
research
           set
in the window - reset ---
the frame for a man at odds---
window   which opens out
as if from no place
in its setting.
And the man at odds-
even though master-
is still a journey / man:
Man on a trip.
Moves slightly,
but protects himself.
The arch settles under snow.
The odd man pits the snow
with words and with distance.
He does not go there.

It is the loss,
                  and the pity of loss,
held and imagined -
real and unreal -
an emptiness
which fills void
more than the empty.
Whom does he touch?
the lone man asking
these questions
of those who cannot answer,
who offer him
a fresh helping of
meat and potatoes?

The stewards and servants are untouched.
And the king is dead.

(Returning
the arch
seemed
smaller
re
treat)

A question asked
which meant age had acquired
the querent -
not growth.

Welcome
which is delight
in fact
which may not be
more than burden:
Parvenu/
/bienvenue.
It is not known which of them,
on which side of the door,
has extended to the other,
or
{whether
{between

falls
and the door shuts
WITH A BANG.

Nowhere to get your hooks in---
nothing to say---
and the hand smarts
from cut and from salt.
Someone said:
Similia similibus curantur,
as ethos,
but another hand
puts on the bandage.

Slowly forming an accretion,
as through many days
the slight seethed snow
builds silently,
and reserves an echo/.

There is solitude,
and here are people.
It has changed the forms,
and the salt is bitter
as the hand' s blood,
bitter,
          or by herbs---
as some remember it.
I think of darkness.
Some may go into it,
others carry it---
the suit which is invisible,
and no shadow in the mirror
                                        no
reflection on the sun.
They made the way---
openly climbed it---
cursing at times---
and then too deeply hurt
they gave in.
Only the man on the trip
knows that.
He saves face by
other means.
Trying to complete the work,
hesitant and beyond means.
He could speak of   a familiar----.
He had better not.
(clock striking
                    jumps the heart -
extreme nervousness
bordering on hysteria.)
Settling on sights - up
                         ward,
as if at the wrong end of things,
and lense turned macro/micro,
indeterminate.
                    Could quote:
But ____ ________ will not.
Settles for a little---
breaks back---
                    the words fall
and sort themselves,
by weight---
               the gravity---
or gravid -
               silence
opens birth

the wombstone.
Hardly the last of it---
or beginning---makes head---
makes tail---
makes
sequence into secret---
masters way
and way is
plunge
down.
Creates silence,
contra.
Now the very slightest---
to pull out of
context.
No, these are all used up
words which make
a sameness out of torture.
"Why did you turn it off?
It was just getting interesting."
No, never,
now,
ever,
as if streets
tending---
the sedentary
SIT.
Oh, measure me
a closure---
dense and
re-
mains are---
break the--
oh, the head sleeps---
and the hand opens---
clutching
now
why?
The tall ghost---
flame
candle---
all becomes chaos,
or
Samuel
Similia
Hahnemann
tickles the nose---
snuff
pinched
there was a time.

Curantur et curantur.
But it is not in waiting.
They have built me a skein
of prophecy---they built me
small things---
                    hence
they---.
                and
like cures like
in image and likeness.

Crosshatching
                    the tracks of small birds
lace on new snow
tentative
            as the world is.

He talked of receiving the fates in reverse order:
Atropos,   Lachesis,
and being left with the spindle,
on which to wind
a celebration.
                    Fears came later,
and he was spared them.

Constantine
Hering

A heap of boards for this one---
the way they lie in early sunlight,
weeping the night' s frost.
I can stand   at a window
and see this---
I can move away from it---
I can---
but it is merely the day beginning---
I cannot change it.
Flexing a hand on the sill,
I pick up the same light,
perhaps quicken at the source,
though I move away from it.
There is another frost
which lies deeper---
looks for its own sunlight.

Or the tree   stands with its own weight,
and is unaware of it.
Held and enclosed
it rises from the root.
Attempt, lightly,
to leave it.

But I have seen this tree cut down,
and the weight attempt return.
It is a weight I lift,
by which I am hurt.
"When a tree blossoms
Paracelsus   it is always because of the fruit
which desires to ripen in it."
And another weight
falls free.
Or the ghost reminds me
that we live in chaos---
figurative or actual.
They are the same.
The sadness of a   will imposed.
The personal element dissolves,
and we gasp for breath.
I withdraw my hand,
and there is no more sunlight.
Whatever I touch -
oh, but the blood remembers,
holds warmth which would have died
at source without it---
pick up
          and go on.
It is the size of a hand
that holds the weight of light.
I do conceive it so,
and as conceived,
it is the possible---
no miracle---
Wilhelm   an exchange of hands
Reich   taken to a prime source.
Prima luce.
Who goes in,
goes out.
              I do not hesitate.
Nor could we weigh this weight
Paracelsus   by means or measure.
                              It is a weight
suspended in its element---
as such---the tree.
Hahnemann   SSC.
          (as the caduceus)
Paracelsus   🜔 🜍 ☿ :   In this the element
from elements.
Trientity
                (which is one)
Hering   Goes out the tide as death---

comes in - resolves -
as birth, but never ends there.
whom we know as water,
or the water spirits.

Whereas the odd man turned
from the window,
                    leaving it
somewhat behind him, and I
know that this was -
and no way -
or if I had been on the way back---
the wall
        of which a good Jew speaks.
Intelligence lacking,
as symptom following sympton---
primus - secundus.
                    Each one
sensing.
        It will be
only what we find it to be.
It is a bravery to begin this,
but it will end
sublimated---
the fire which breaks out
in the hold of a ship
on alien water.

(And he has headed east
from the west to which he came.)

Heat
Heat
Heat
the step beyond good and into evil.
Now, at a time,
the voice remembers
me
    the split tradition
what is inside
and outside a man.

Colloquoy or collage.
Do you know how it was made?
or the difference in making?
The frogs outside
                    and a summer night
  made

(I remember the drops of water
caught in the orange canopy of a parachute,
early the next warm morning,
and the sun shot through them.
It was thirst.)
Almost anything is relevant.
Did you know how to prevent it?
If the devotion were simply to say
Hering 'Jetzt Sterbe Ich,'
it would suffice.
The artifice of talk seen through,
and the account of death
a hoax,
as the death itself was not.
Well, there were others,
and there are others
passing
repassing
below the arch of the window,
by the misplaced tomb.
I remember amusement:
to see what someone had written there
in snow.
"Come on in!"
A fair enough joke
or move
for the odd man
out.

As when I left,
and the tears of leaving dried
hard-caked salt
which I did not wash
for two days..
It is in this way
that things move
forward and back,
that they break loose,
and break me loose.
They could have called me one day,
and I might have answered---
yes, the wonder was I didn't.
Now,
even the arch
is a memorial.

Back again, but not back,
the clouds of such movement

catch against my head,
and I am personal:
Equal the odd man.

I think of what has been perverted,
and what and whom persecuted.
Paracelsus Some say he was pushed
over a cliff at night---returning
from a banquet in Salzburg---
slain by his enemies.
Others, that he was addicted to
' Laudani Suum, '
and died of his own overdose.
In either case the persecution
was actual.
                    There are four hundred years
of feeling to attest it.

Hahnemann The rainmaker, and the healer,
Reich where is the difference?
Who has risen against whom?
Perhaps a younger country,
made a momentary difference?
Hering Or was it I,
                    always the I,
or the odd man
                        out
who knew all of it?
AURUM NOSTROM NON SUNT AURI VULGI

(And the dreams of fair women,
these always,
                    expressed
in language suited to them
or to their times.

So,
      even in wine,
Hering a care for drinking it.
"You must never waste
                                a drop of wine,
for it takes seven drops of sweat
in labor
             to make it."
If it were that much---
his care in little things,
the trust for greater follows.
In such time as there might be,

to spend a life in one devotion,
which was all of it---
How is that, odd man,
what do you hear?

The symbol of the arch
goes higher
and the symbol
in the snow
can balance it.
I search myself
to find
my balance,
wanting
no mere scales to weigh
what has no weight,
and all of it.

Or as the pear may ripen in its tree,
the star hang out
above its clouds-
or we go slowly through a world
- our chaos -
and counter-signs,
or those that contramand them.

The encomiums are given,
written for those who write them.
It is a hard thing for men
to disbelieve their own words,
what they make with them,
and out of them.
Nothing
and
the emptiness opens out - for them -
the days grow longer
under the arch.
To establish the link
of an unbroken continuum
becomes the guiding passion,
or by its principle a man lives
when all other ways of living
have become impossible.
Whatever it was he wanted,
he wants in other ways---now---
wants it out.
To test the iconography of
his going there---

to touch
on many symbols, looking for the key
which will unlock it---
or
what is it that remains to be done?
It was in dreams at the first of it,
and it ends---
in dreams.
I do not know how much,
nor does the man next to me.
Perhaps to call on the old man
Hering
in his study,
"at 4:15 a. m. tomorrow,"
would be one way.
Was it only
in this way that we met?
Or did we see each other
on that lonely road with rain?
when I realized that he was closer home than I?
May have been a case of saving
his own skin, as I saved mine
by waking.
It would be good to know just
how often it is possible,
or, again,
it might be better
to avoid the whole issue.

There are things a layman does not know,
or want or need to know,
which is quite another case
than the unreasoning complaint
of the ignorant, who are angry
that they do not understand words
which are unfamiliar---but exact.
They cry out for simplicity
(a good thing)
but want only words and symbols
which they already know,
and which say nothing of the case in hand.
Some of it is difficult,
as love of it is difficult
to measure
or assess by ordinary means.

There are the detractors---
those who cannot follow
the type of mind,

(at times
the award of grudging admiration
tempered with vinegar.
Those at the arch are used to it.
There is nothing new,
and nothing to fear in that.
It has been the companion
of all unusual men.

Or as a man with snow---
his first in many years---
Hering
bends over and clutches it:
"I took it up in my hands,
and was glad."
And another looks apprehensively
at the sky.

(To make good tea,
you must bring the pot
to the water
- boiling -
There must be no loss.)

And that a man may become convinced
Winfield Scott
Hill
in later years
is a fine thing.
"Conceit" would say it
in another time and language.
It could be the fortune
of one standing under the arch
to do these things---
to change direction
as the wind veers its decision.
It is not haphazard.
The turn redeems itself
suddenly
and in new context---
what was suspected
points the way.
The man at the arch
eats his heart
out,
but stands his ground
pivoting
to a new direction.
And this misreading:
"confusion" for "companion"
is actual.

It fits the hand like a tool.
Slow to clear---slow to clear.
The day moves from one clogged hour
to the next one.
Slowly
it wears itself out
against its own abrasion.
A man sitting beneath it
is crushed by a great weight---
the weight within himself---
and the weight beyond himself.

Or the man whose illness
led to a sense of
'sand running all through me',
grain by grain.
(The sharp blowing of snow
against a face set into the wind.)
One knows---
but what one knows
changes as one approaches death.
Death at the arch
is the fate of the undecided---
those who do not open the window.
The right blow struck,
and it opens out
into a night with stars---
into a day which turns again
to night.

Wherever they went---
men, into the night of themselves,
seeking themselves
out of what they could not find.
It was other than that---
and yet it seemed
a way.
I had wondered, early in life,
what it was I saw
in the ship hull down on the horizon,
and the fear of it,
the masts
dark in the sun
which seemed to shed
dark light
blotting out that same horizon.
Later, I found it in myself,
and the sea

where I foundered.
It was fear that took me there,
and fear that I might lose it
passing
into the fog---
the shoals offshore.

Whatever opposes
becomes the same---
and it is the overt act
of blindness which remains
apart---
the seeming contrary.
It is a hard lesson,
and one unlearned in
Galen
reputation which can darken
the future:
'Smite men ill.'
We do not know by hazard,
yet we know everything
from it.
The perverse night
and the flicker in a far swamp
will say it.
We will have no way
without it.
This and this,
not this or this---
the strange man laughing
after a good dinner,
or for want of it,
immersed in himself,
by which he gives to others.

These days
the mornings
are colder
than what
they pre
cede
or make known
by noon.
Midafternoon
the waning
again.

The man grows cold in his boots
under the arch,

or against the arch---
wherever he is,
and wherever he is known to be.
It is not 'whereabouts.'
It is fixed
            on another scale.
These days
              the mornings.
These nights
                the afterward.

Could it be the chance?
The man used to a chance,
or the hard growth
of a hand trembling---
tired of the tool it holds,
from which no work
is good enough?
No profit in it,
and no chance.

They said these things,
and went on sweating,
a curse to the man
free
      on the road
between the fields
hot with summer
and roman wormwood---
that he had no thought
and no care for them.
He shook his head
                      walked by,
and hoped that one might come to him.

Stay, tree,
or stay by the trees---
the answer being?
is in
      being---
or began
          the buzz/
drone
        of an old bee.
Oh, let him rest---
as if to be were rest---
and let an old man die
in his boots

                by arch
for sufferance.
Close tolerance,
the dismissal again---
stay,
        stay tree.
Whoever passes underneath it,
shall know blood,
and then shall pass again.
Tree, stay.

Or having had that time alone,
what man can tell me
where the wind blows?
or where the rain goes?
or who is burning in the sky,
turning a wheel,
or fashioning his loneliness
from dreams?
But all of us, alone, know this:
It is what may be done
from it
          with it
but never to it.
Looking for a piece of shell in clouds,
or for a cloud in water---
(at the bottom of the well
is best for it.)
It is in these ways we rise
and wax
          and fall again.
No one of us that touches
knows from whence the touch,
or where we will go
when no wind blows.
It is out of us,
and it is in us.
It is our way---
and yet no way at all.

From the valley,
the fault in the mountain
hardly shows.
It is in these days of frost
we move more quickly,
and know those things
the valley cannot know:
A deepness

Doctrine of
Signatura /
Similia Similibus
curantur /
Materia Medica
Pura /

and a rise---
how these things are the same,
and how their likeness
is by sign,
by ownership
of malign
for its curse---
never its negation,
and not by admixture.
So, if you will, a space,
and in the space, a breathing.

A middle distance---
where it is heard
by a sense of the ear
and not the ear itself.
A cutting in for many---
inter
jection,
but not from the self.
It is only in this way
that I become
what I am
that I am.
Known by others
simply for the distance---
what was thought aloof.
"Peculiar as all hell,
but a pleasant man to talk to."
Infused
with my own madness---
the obsession of making,
another talks of it.
I can,
and cannot.
And under that pleasantry,
a seething,
a furnace
filled with ingots of white metal---
what it is cannot be known
until it cools---
perhaps
not bright.
It is a hard door to open.
Perhaps in other years,
in other ways,
when the man has vanished---
not the arch.

I talked to many of them.
Some were interested,
some listened out of habit,
and a few refuse,
telling me they would read it,
but that my enthusiasm
was alien to them.
I spent the time looking
for dead branches on the snow,
hauling water---
or half asleep.
There could be a waking---
there could be another sleep.
The road?
Where is
              or was
one?

Admixturing.
A tincture,
something preserved,
Hahnemann — but having within itself
the power
of originals---
Offici nal.
An own high potency
in smaller part.

How could I look at
so many things
without dizzying?
I am no Jew,
and there is no kaddish,
no wailing wall,
as there is always one
for him---
the man who became my friend.
He, at least,
looked for it.
I knew there was no reason,
but he knew better,
and for both of us
the decision was just.

To whom it looks as it is,
which may not be as it is
in looking
              commonly.

It reverses the hill,
opens over it
and rises to
itself
steep
climb
outside
the cobbled sky
speaks wind
and
clears.
It is in the mind of it---
the direction
and the wind.
" A capful of wind,
and we shall have snow. "
From the north and the east---
the bruise of a sky
against old drifts.
The odd reasoning:
That it should be,
and then a curse that it is.
An old man bowing
his obeissance
talks of god,
but knows that he holds god
within himself,
and when he has seen god,
he has seen clearly
what he is.
A young man rarely knows this,
but holds god
at a distance,
within hands that are his
- a very god' s -
that questions the concept,
and breaks him apart.
It is only a sadness
that repeats itself,
that denies,
yet renews it.
Singing a mass for the dead,
this young man
learns the rituals
from the old ones,
imperfectly,
and changes them
within their imperfections

as he has misunderstood.
A cycle
          spirals
up.
The younger ones, also,
and always the elders---
the principle splitting,
like a chisel through ice---
a stone through the skull.
" An iron flute
without stops
or let for breath" .

So be it---
so willed and unknown---
the partial clearing
of those clouds
which had gathered,
parted and remade.
The storm which came
in another place,
and was known here.
That is the passion
of our doing.
It is the undoing
of those who are wise enough
to know it for what it is.
That like
            is like element---
and the element
reduces itself by inquiry
to an elixir---
that life is the furnace
to remake it
and destroy it
in what it makes
and remakes.
Splitting the brain apart,
knowing and dividing
yet
    not knowing---
completing the sum
of its own parts
before it has form
but
    never the void---
a trap and a pitfall.
The wise men

Paracelsus
Hahnemann
Hering

on the outside
taking a course at sea,
laughing at times,
at bitter tide:
Washing in and out
a primal salt.
⊖ 🜍 ☿

[note: the poem SYNTHESIS now consists of 18 sections and is not completed. The first two sections of the poem appeared in Caterpillar #11. More sections will appear, in cronological order, in future issues.]

Brian McInerney: (7 poems

AMERICAN

the face calls,
from beneath the well

water

is here, come
drink.

I lower myself
from the spring breeze,

turn toward

the calling.

Around each table, a
chair
is placed

calmly

I know it is not a calculation.

At the base of the rock
near where the first drop flows,
the night begins in the
forest.

for Robert Kelly's Moon
September 18, 1970

THE WORLD

outside
is

a thought,

a consecutive thought
laid down,
written
on a page -

the idea of a room.

for you,
to you alone

I am alone,
a leading into

thought, a

solution

laid down, reading
on this page

THE HILL

a smaller place, no
larger than a block of stores
around

leading to a bridge,
crosses
only over a river

no to

the limit of what I see
is here

CONTROL

slowly

slower now, the edge
of
my skin

equal,

equaled to the push

MEDIAL

when the voices ceased
of their own leaving

the midnight lay herself down
in a quiet manner

and the face of the one I had known
lived on

PROJECT

an apartment gathers
neighboring sounds,

a window remains fixed
above the floor

FATE

Her childhood face in passing me
looked open

and when I for a moment turned
I saw my own doubt come outward.

I had found myself a body in which to live.

And when I spoke I heard a teaching,
a saying to her look beyond your home and see

a girl become woman.
Your brother watches his hand around this world,

take and bear your name to be.

But I could not lie and so my end.

She who in my mind I followed
remained distant,

would not acknowledge me to call.

Fielding Dawson:

ROOTS & BRANCHES

A home made major league base hit
mystery for Robert Duncan

I had a boozer's lunch today with this guy from work, and he talked about a girl I had seen him with briefly, a few weeks ago. Wait a second. Are the lights low? Yes, and there you are, my friendly bartender; how strange. It is closing time and you are so sensitive, and you have just given me one for the journey - HEY, ARE YOU THERE?

-- He was away for no, for two and a half days, and I had asked about him. I was worried, because, well, because he was wounded deeply, and somewhere along the line he met her, the girl he was talking about today, he said he had taken her out to Shea Stadium and she said she hadn't known anything about baseball, and he hadn't met my eyes but had sipped his drink. He had fainted, and his stepfather had gotten him to the hospital, two days he was in coma, and his eyes are ringed black, he peers out of his haunted workingman's eyes, talking about how he felt about her, they had talked, and I admired him, in his half conscious fight for himself with her, God he has an honesty I envy.

He said let's go to a night game and she said swell; the Mets and the Cardinals with Gibson pitching and he said to her if you have any questions and she said I really don't like baseball, and he said okay but if you have any questions, ask me.

His eyes flashed at me and I saw he was proud of himself, and loved her - no - I loved her, he said she had asked only four questions, and I saw the two of them there in the stands behind first base, as Harrelson ran fast behind second, caught it and pivoted and lashed the throw to first for the out, and no one but we who know understands why he had and has, must get it there, that it's his to get there, as to get it, to get it all.

Then Cleon Jones ran across the outfield and caught a fly ball.

It is yes a hard multiplicity to open up speaking, and he doesn't trust me, well why should he. He trusts me implicitly, and needs me to understand. Him, etc., perceive, respond, and speak from the response, and when he said he kissed her, as, 'I kissed her,'

I kissed her. No, it was him saying it, I didn't kiss her, he said I kissed her and I a little died, missing her arms and lips - I mean when he introduced her to me, I saw into her eyes.

She saw, she too. She saw me, and her eyes were just as serious as the secret I lost in looking, yet - these were - her eyes were, understanding eyes, and she saw me speaking within our united vision, Claudia, I understand.

In the soft deep light, it hurts, saying my name, and the feminine verbally actualizing the passage of vision, hi, I'm Claudia.

He said she's flexible with people, it was my word, and I said flexible and looked at him and he grinned, and he nodded over his Grand Dad at lunchtime in a kind of doomsday understanding of his own, and I was, I suppose, cruel, she and I had spoken once later, before he had taken her out to Shea, so briefly, ships passing in the night, but deep quick talk, I *got* there, and she swerved those round remarkable target eyes onto mine, and it was as if lines had been there, that already we knew, to each other, but in one we crossed once -

She cheered he said, when Cleon ran across and got it, she told him she cheered not because it was an out, but because of the *play*, and I might as well have been there, so I could have seen her eyes begin to gaze and go when the ball was hit and Cleon already going across that outfield, and when he got there, and it was already, he was in the air with his back to the infield, and his glove out, in his line and in the fragment of the split-second, the lines crossed, and held in Claudia's eyes to a simultaneous responsive cheer, just as Cleon caught the ball, and fell headlong on the green turf as forty thousand voices roared *hooray*, he GOT it! Across in her eyes the night she went to the ballgame.

David Bromige:

"Dear Night"

Dear night -- that permits
my face to be reflected in
this window, yet
creates the village lights behind,
beyond,
let me repeat
that story which you tell,

I am alone here,
the woman I live with has driven to the city,
my limbs face & body are
still firm & I desire them

while of all these constellations
Bloomfield's 7 street lights only
shimmer as if a car, the unlikely
old girlfriend at the wheel, might
even now draw near

night, you are since I perceive you
& I exist in that perception &
praise you as you verify my being.
Let the less fortunate
fret out their fates. Night,

figure of speech, this voice
within my lovely head
says,
As if a landscape had
buried me entirely

the world proceeds, Bloomfield even
can't see me,
she comes,
blesses with her quick
vivaciousness

nothing, she is not here.
Remember

night in the tale how I
dug this self free to
find the lover, naked we
made it then paraded through that
cheering crowd, each & every eye

upon me till I glimpsed
you there, whispering
Blind, all blind -- incredulous
I noticed how within the undeniable
look of life each bright
organ sustained a piece of you at center
where surely you must know
that what you say is true --

thus I have no more shame before you
than if I'd driven down to town to pass
time drinking or
listening among a throng to songs
asserting multiply our presences

& let her take me in your sight
& thus our night of loving is
spent, muttering one to the other
of aloneness, as if
naming a lost lover.

Stan Brakhage:

CARL THEODORE DREYER

Did you ever know a "Carl" ?: did you know him as 'a boy' ?: was he pale? -- either of skin or hair . . . were his eyebrows blond? . . . or were they simply thin? -- against white skin - - - were his lips, perhaps, tight and his eye's of a narrowed reflectiveness?: did you know anyone, ever, at all, like Carl Theodore Dreyer?: did you ever play with a child that quietly wild; and can you really remember him?

Can you imagine him -- this Carl you might once have known -- born a Dane? . . . a Danish 'laddie', then? -- oh, No! . . . "laddie" is a term that will not, really, attach itself to a Denmark boy: it rides too trippingly upon the tongue -- bespeaks a childishness of pastorality and animal fun -- (Denmark too sophisticated for such simple stuff . . . too much part of Continental Europe) -- "laddie" like a run upon hills and vales more green than white . . . (rather than the flat studious playland Danes inhabit) . . . ah, No! -- one must search another term to go with Dane, child or man. Tho' there *are* Danish children -- (and tho' both Swedes and Norwegians go to Denmark most to play . . . to be a child, again, on winter's holiday) -- can *a Dane* be "child" ? . . . or must he, young Carl, be definitively "boy" -- a Danish boy, when young? . . . must he be considered that kind of cultural prelude to the specificity of Man?: in the late 19th century Denmark of our imagination . . . (of the latitude of "laddie", but far too level and levelheaded for that) . . . yes! -- I think he *must* be so-considered: boy Dane, then -- Carl!

Is there any area of our consideration which will *not* be (as St. Paul would have the language of it, lacking face) "thru a glass darkly" ?: can we play with him, Carl then, in anything akin to his natural habitat? I think not! -- think on the mists of Denmark . . . think onto "Hamlet" (there being *nothing* other, in the English language, to prepare us for this game with him): but let us play anyway (like Swedes on holiday) -- move our minds thru mists and ice and urgency of quickened summer crops and thick religiosity and sin-as-fun . . . stolid fogs and fierce bright want: let us try a game of hopscotch in this severe climate of most foreign (almost Russian) field of playful thought -- for the mind of Carl will naturally skip and jump, as if to fool and warm itself, in just exactly the way the eye will shift when confronted by a landscape almost completely flat and white with snow or wheat . . . in zigzags, as a cross-country skier . . . with leaps as silently sudden as avalanching snow -- off roof or tree.

But let me warn -- before the game . . . we have not dealt with the prime fact yet of Carl's make-up -- that he was an artist . . . a late 19th century Danish boy who was to grow up to be an artist: the game, then, is a deadly one -- sure, as Life itself, to end in Death! Can we play with that? -- if not, then best to quit . . . before the downhill race begins . . . before the "Theodore" of his name intrudes upon his living -- and, then, yours.

Carl Theodore Dreyer -- blond Teutonic boy (grey mist's light) with fairest skin (rubbed red from fire within) and thinnest features (taut with stance) and sharpest eyes (ice) imaginable . . . ah eyes! -- what shall we think of eyes like that?

(Let me present you, now and again, with pieces of a puzzle written by Carl's fellow countryman, Hans Christian Andersen, who'd died just a few years before Carl was, in 1889, born: to begin then, this "First Story" of "The Snow Queen", which must surely have been read to him, young Carl, again and again: imagine him listening, then, this first time, in the year of our myth of him, to the true history of his own damnation -- the account of the stitch of the net that trapped him before his birth . . . the key to the lock of his childhood Fate and all that was to follow naturally after):

("Now we are about to begin and you must attend! And when we get to the end of the story, you will know more than you do now about a very wicked hobgoblin. He was one of the worst kind; in fact he was a real demon.

("One day this demon was in a high state of delight because he had invented a mirror with this peculiarity: that every good and pretty thing reflected in it shrank away to almost nothing. On the other hand, every bad and good-for-nothing thing stood out and looked its worst. The most beautiful landscapes reflected in it look like boiled spinach, and the best people became hideous, or else they were upside down and had no bodies. Their faces were distorted beyond recognition, and if they had even one freckle it appeared to spread all over the nose and mouth. The demon thought this immensely amusing. If a good thought passed through anyone's mind, it turned to a grin in the mirror, and this caused real delight to the demon.

("All the pupils in the demon's school -- for he kept a school -- reported that a miracle had taken place: now for the first time, they said, it was possible to see what the world and mankind were really like. They ran about everywhere with the mirror, till at last there was not a country or a person which had not been seen in this distorting mirror.

("They even wanted to fly up to heaven with it to mock the angels. But the higher they flew the more it grinned, so much so that they could hardly hold it. And at last it slipped out of their hands and fell to the earth, slivered into hundreds of millions and billions of bits. Even then it did more harm than ever. Some of these bits were not as big as a grain of sand, and these flew about all over the world, getting into people's eyes. Once in, they stuck there and distorted everything they looked at, or made them see everything that was amiss. Each tiniest grain of glass kept the same power as that possessed by the whole mirror. Some people even got a bit of the glass into their hearts, and that was terrible for the heart became like a lump of ice. Some of the fragments were so big that they were used for window-panes, but it was not advisable to look at one's friends through these panes. Other bits were made into spectacles, and it was a bad business when people meaning to be just put on these spectacles.

("The bad demon laughed till he split his sides! It tickled him to see the mischief he had done. But some of these fragments were still left floating about the world, and you shall hear what happened to them.")

Young Carl (variation of "Karl", Scandanavian for "Charles", being Germanic name, then, meaning " man of the common people") listening to Hans -- feeling the call of the language in his bones, knowing the beat of the rhythms of it in his heart . . . sensing, in owl-like childishness, himself as a part of all this and yet apart -- feeling his elf-self as a possible demon . . . sensing, in common, himself as victim -- young Carl . . . Theodore, then (from the Greek, meaning "gift of God") emerging in him -- self as such . . . stuff as heros are made-of -- : had he been named Theodore Carl Dreyer, he might have become a Hero, killed in some war or other . . . : as it was, he became an artist -- "Man of the common people" *first* . . . "gift of God" as an afterthought of his parents which he took *upon* himself: in some high school Greek lesson, later, he certainly determined the full spell of his name for announcement ever after: Carl *Theodore* Dreyer: full measure of his meaning.

For he was a pre-destined Man, as any male Dane -- and a particular Man, as none before him nor any after . . . and a meticulous Man, beyond every belief of his upbringing -- beyond any article of faith that might have given object to his sub-zeroing-in on himself . . . oh, yes!, he was to be "The" Dreyer -- as well as any given "Carl" . . . search-out the demon-of-himself -- as well as the "Kay" (of the Hans Christian story of the little Kay and Gerda, boy and girl of the Andersen puzzle) / (as well as Kafka searched-out *his* "K" thru 'Trial' and 'Castilian' nightmare) . . . and search-out "The Snow Queen" herself in the iciest habitat of his imagination of witchiest woman -- as well as, finally, Gerda girl herself/himself's femalian being at the end of his life, when he made "Gertrude" -- a show-biz. drama by fellow Scandanavian (novelist and playwrite Soderberg) -- into the greatest play-of-light ever to focus upon the fret of woman's love, upon the keys and stops of orgiastic damnation.

(For those of you who *think* you do not know the story -- listen a bit, again, to Hans . . .):

("Kay and Gerda were looking at a picture book of birds and animals one day -- it had just struck five by the church clock -- when Kay said, "OH! Something struck my heart and I have got something in my eye."

("The little girl put her arms round his neck. He blinked his eye, but there was nothing to be seen.

("I believe it is gone," he said, but it was not gone. It was one of those very grains of glass from the mirror, the magic mirror. You remember that horrid mirror in which all good and great things reflected in it became small and mean, while the bad things were magnified and every flaw became very apparent.

("Poor Kay! A grain of it had gone straight to his heart and would soon turn it to a lump of ice. He did not feel it any more but it was still there.

("Why do you cry?" he asked. "It makes you look ugly. There's nothing the matter with me. How horrid!" he suddenly cried. "There's a worm in that rose, and that one is quite crooked. After all, they are nasty roses and so are the boxes they are growing in!" He kicked the box and broke off two of the roses.

("What are you doing, Kay?" cried the little girl. When he saw her alarm, he broke off another rose, and then ran in by his own window and left dear little Gerda alone.')

Carl Theodore Dreyer became, first, a journalist -- and he raked his share of muck with Denmark's best of them . . . flinging verbal mud with abandon any young man can assume whose come to himself as 'the news' in the safe repetitions of daily papers -- wonderful, to him, how 'The Cause' occludes to journalism's language . . . inasmuch as its style of writ pretends an impartiality -- a lack of all personal sense of "be", as in before 'the cause', because, etc. (all journalism, thus, is 'ghost-writ' . . . as if no human had ever touched the words of any such as is known as 'the report' -- shots, therefore, in the dark of letters utterly immoral in every stance that makes them fit for newspaper print) . . . oh, yes!, young Carl's greatest delight -- this shift of columns of blackest thought!

To follow newsmen, he was, of course, simply "Carl" -- or, perhaps, "young Dreyer". . . one cannot have a "Theodore", after all, in a newspaper office . . . think of the jokes such plume-of-name would engender there: and Carl was not to remain content with journalistic thought -- not more than a couple of years . . . by 1912 he was writing scenarios and editing films -- (for he did certainly intend to 'grow-up') . . . (and all journalists must remain adolescent-at-heart!)

See the instant, in which he saw, the moving image as impartial fact . . . as immoral a-'black-on-white' as any imagined newspaper truth: (for if you suppose -- as he did then -- the camera to be a reporter of life, then its record of any event on columns of celluloid becomes journalism's ultimate dream: :the report of a machine): to write, therefore, what the machine will report, once acted-out, and to edit, after, its strips of so-called "reality" . . . very much as any news editor arranges his paper . . . and to see it, then, run its f'act-of-life as if for the first time in darkened auditorium -- as if it/act had just happened . . . as, in fact, it had -- oh! . . . this was to fly in the face of heaven -- and/or to come close to being God.

But cinema, as medium, offered Carl more 'growth-up' than any making-of-news or mimic-of-heaven -- for film is a Jacob's-ladder that moves thru Time, as well as Space . . . (think of the difference between the verbs "record" and "report") . . . : a motion picture is, as it were, a record -- vibrates beyond any verb . . . beyond any such as might be called a report: for any 'movie', once shown, can be shown again in the light of itself's as-if fact -- an eventuality as if it were, as it ran again and again, eternity's drum . . . unreeling itself in a spin of hypnotic dream -- a beseeming, then, as real as the inner life of any man: and this was, as entertainment, a "grin wide enough to take the whole world in . . . until it shattered, for him, in his "30th year to heaven" -- when he wrote and then, also, directed his first film: "The President": and became the master of facial mime: :he who makes the faces of others his own . . . who makes them him/he them -- i.e., when he became "the mirror" itself, in his innermost being.

(As Hans had said):

("When his grandmother told them stories he always had a but --.

And if he could manage it, he liked to get behind her chair, put on her spectacles, and imitate her. He did it very well and people laughed at him. He was soon able to imitate everyone in the street. He could make fun of all their peculiarities and failings. "He will turn out a clever fellow", said people. . . . He played quite different games now; he seemed to have grown older.')

Now -- understand this, please . . . : a journalist discovering the term "to be" and attaching it to his sense of "cause" -- a journalist discovering eternity . . . : this was Carl Theodore Dreyer directing his first actor's features to fit those of his innermost self: this was the beginning of morality for him in his search for Truth -- as opposed to any news sense of Fact . . . his making a 'cause' his -- as opposed to serving any "The Cause".

(Every journalist must serve first "The Cause" of Fact, when he pretends to write "objectively", as it's called -- when he pretends, therefore, his act were guided by the hand of an impartial god . . . tends to a poker-face-type, hiding every trick in the newspaper game.)

Dryer came, via journeyman film, to the end of all such 'sameness' as would comfort Man -- as Bibles and newspapers do -- and found himself torn apart . . . as you will, too, if you see -- as he saw -- that map of hell and heavenly grace all "flesh is heir to" in any visage . . . that "marriage of Heaven and Hell" possible in any humanly moving face.

But what do we mean -- what did he -- when we call a movie actor, or actress, "a star"? . . . a face of light! -- most surely that! -- but what?/ what's 'star-like' in that? . . . if not to make a crystalline fire of feature? . . . if not to turn all flesh, of it, to a burn of ice? -- to freeze the animal shifts of all such feature into some perfection-of-thought -- to turn the reflected world itself into a mask's hat.

(As Hans would have Kay have it):

("In the evening when little Kay was at home and half undressed, he crept up onto the chair by the window and peeped out of the little hole. A few snowflakes were falling, and one of these, the biggest, remained on the edge of the window box. It grew bigger and bigger, till it became the figure of a woman dressed in the finest white gauze, which appeared to be made of millions of starry flakes. She was delicately lovely, but all ice -- glittering, dazzling ice. Still she was alive. Her eyes shone like two bright stars, but there was no rest or peace in them. She nodded to the window and waved her hand. The little boy was frightened and jumped down off the chair . . . ")

Is it any wonder that Dreyer -- young Fact-foundry, that he'd been -- should turn . . . in Truth . . . to the films of Griffith for inspiration: he patterned his next film -- "Leaves From The Book of Satan" -- after Griffith's "Intolerance". . . : but it was a mistake to think he could emulate this American. It was only as writer that Dreyer felt inspired by Griffith's ideals -- to get at Truth, to 'dog' and 'worry' it, thru quotes of Fact . . . Historical Fact, as it happened in Griffith's imagination -- an altogether different matter than 'God's' Truth as a newspaper-man might see it.

Think of him, Carl Theodore, reading Marie Corelli's "The Sorrows of Satan" -- his eyes, those 'blues' of sight, that graced his face with immediate advertisement of all his inner sorrow -- those eyes of his, then, shifting across this text that might have been writ by "The Snow Queen", herself, in irony and pity of The Devil's plight: . . . the fight to win the unpredictable soul of man -- : "poor Devil," then . . . the pity any woman might have for a fallen angel or man, half-masked in the prose-of-her by an iron smile of Christian train-of-thought, Christianity's sure-of-itself charity for 'the heathen', 'the weak' -- "poor Devil" said, therefore, very much as a mother might fondly damn her son . . . before teaching him -- as she'd been trained-to-do -- the 'error of his ways', the price he'd pay for all such fault . . . as any pride, in him, she'd love -- and as the "pride goeth before a fall." Think of Dreyer, then, reading this woman's text and imagining himself as her Devil's-child-pitied -- thinking of 'Daddy' Griffith/Historical Fact, in motion pic . . . imagining himself, Carl Theodore Dreyer, mending "error of his ways" with moral-movie-tract of "Intolerance" -- thinking of himself as Denmark's Griffith. See him, therefore, writing scenario, of Marie's book, in the darkest hours of his Danish night -- feverish with all thought of bringing mothers and fathers together, again, in him . . . The Devil, himself, gone moral in heaven's hellish marriage -- as he wrote the script 'first person', Devil speaking, and titled it: "Leaves From The Book of Satan."

It failed, in motion -- emotionally failed from scratch . . . naturally -- inasmuch as he/Dreyer was *not* The Devil, nor in any way demonic . . . and discovered that, surely first time in his living, by making this film: (the world of movie-goers hasn't discovered that yet, of him . . . still thinks of Dreyer as 'satanic'): failed, then (with them) -- inasmuch as he was not simply Carl, nor "The Snow Queen", either . . . tho' he'd be struggling to think of himself as such till the end of his life -- inasmuch as he was also not, in any sense, David Wark Griffith.

Carl Theodore Dreyer took four Marie stories, made them his own in Devil's tongue, but could in *no*-wise bring himself to cut them up, intercut them, or in any way reduce their verbal sense to visual fact -- as Griffith had done . . . (for Griffith took Fact to be Myth -- as in History it IS): Dreyer's film ends-up as an as-if 'interview' of old Satan, himself, who, as usual, lies in his eye-teeth . . . (and, as is the value of all 'interview', the film only tells what The Devil is *not* -- not, for instance, Carl Theodore Dreyer -- certainly not!)

In all Carl's work, of these early years, there is a moral fable which prompts his prose -- each piece of journal writ twists itself around a stance, which even haunts his later films . . . it is, to-wit: :that 'the old' suppress 'the young' -- 'the dead' 'the living' -- 'institutions' 'Man' -- 'duty' 'love' -- etc: it is of no importance whatsoever in consideration of the artist Carl Theodore Dreyer . . . nor, thus, of any importance, either, in consideration of the man he was! It, as all stance, hardened his heart -- yes! -- and 'steeled' his eyes; but it did not touch the soul of him . . . nor any knowing of the world in him as he grew up. It was "prosaic", in the fullest sense of the word -- the 'hang-up' of a writer who read . . . as he did . . . too many newspapers, novels, and current plays -- too much of news, novelties and currencies adrift in his Psyche to enable him to budge the mental needle off any crack in the record. The Poet of him found release in language of vision -- paid *no* attention to the thoughts of The Writer . . . except to dance upon whatever stage he'd thought to provide . . . to play upon whatever frets and stops his fussed consciousness could manage . . . and finally to transform all such plotting, as The Writer might be-think, into a being of pure vision -- a visual poetics beyond comprehension.

The first-such work, where the eyes had-it -- above all negation . . . beyond all literachuring in him -- was "Jeanne D'Arc": : "The Passion of Joan of Arc."

He was almost 40 years old; and he'd made enough films, successfully moving, to be famous throughout Europe: Carl Theodore Dreyer -- top Dane . . . movie man -- was brought to Paris to film the life of St. Joan, then, in nationalistic commemoration of the 500th anniversary of her death by fire: was ever any choice more happily ironic than this? -- that Denmark's somber newspaper film-maker should be chosen, above all others, to 'cover' the trial and martyrdom of History's iciest queen at stake . . . Joan the *one* woman, in all West's tradition, to claim and win her *own* place in the heaven of everyone's imagining . . . oh yes! -- she's without a doubt, queen of the highest throne the world has yet granted Woman.

Can you see him, Carl, searching the features of hundreds of actresses -- roaming the streets of Paris -- attending salons -- ranging all 'twenties' France in his desperate search for her, the Joan of his wildest imagination . . . searching for living woman whose features could 'star' as this witch he'd perfectly make her?

Much has *been* made of his final choice: a dance-hall girl at the peak of her sexy fame in Parisian fashion: : Marie -- yes, a Marie, again! -- Marie Falconetti: (one would have to say, today, "Bridgett Bardot", to approximate the effect of Marie's name of that time.) Most, naturally, thought that choice the maddest caprice -- a publicity stunt, perhaps . . . : but it was not any such as that at all -- (nor any such 'satanism' as movie-goers still like to imagine of him/Dreyer): it happened thus:

Poor Carl/"poor Devil" (in the sense he felt himself cursed, or magically unworthy for the holy task "D'Arc", that he could not find an actress in all France who would 'do' for "Joan") had announced he would not, could not, make the film; and he was 'packed' for return to Denmark (in all humility -- such as Parisian sophistication itself can engender in a countryman . . . such as he, Carl, must have been made-to-feel each 'salon' he'd entered -- each French film studio, too -- in his search . . . poor'country' Carl) when -- lo and behold! . . . in a magazine he was idly thumbing thru -- he saw the fashionable face of Falconetti and immediately said (like any king who's found his maid . . . or the foot glass slipper fits upon . . . or perfect feature): she's the one / that's It! -- I'll have her and non other. As I said, much has 'been made', as gossip, of his choice: (none, till now, have thought to look at the likeness between Marie's features and Dreyer's own): Carl found himself, thus, in a fashion magazine; and, as Theodore, chose himself to play with himself in the deadliest game of all: the hermaphrodite's game . . . played, as always, to tortured end -- Death, itself, by fire, for sure!

It was arranged that he and she would meet. When he said what he wanted, she thought him 'mad' -- she laughed at him . . . she teased him, some, in the current fashion, in front of the others: but Carl, who'd, after all, now found himself, was not to be 'put-off' by The Salone: he asked to see her alone: they went into a tiny room: he promised her sex -- natch . . . as she had that reputation of "nymph", which passes these days as "maniac" -- he promised her that and God-knows what-all else besides; he promised her the moon -- the sky . . . all heaven -- as any lover; he proposed immortality, even: even he could not remember what-all he promised her: and twenty minutes after the door shut them apart from the others, she accepted his proposal and agreed to play "Jeanne D'Arc" for him ever after: several days after film shooting began, the men he'd hired for her every pleasure were dismissed by her . . . she'd become, by then, that much Saint . . . : when all the photography was done, she/Marie retired to a madhouse and spent most of the rest of her life, faithful to him, being Joan.

He was faithful to her, too, in every way he was able: he took her text, Joan's -- the transcript of her trial -- and loosed his visual Poet from all writ's task . . . cast poet Antonin Artaud as her, Joan's only friend among all other actors of her martyrdom; he directed the trial in her, Joan's, defense with a will never seen in film before -- exhititing every shift of her face, each agony of transformation of her, with a passion only possible to the truest lover . . . doting on each feature and slightest change of expression; he lovingly set her face in the purest filmic light -- composed such frames as films are truly made-of . . . compositions which lead all eye to the expectancy of movement (rather than to the whole of some static image, as in painting) -- yes!, he unbalanced whole hierarchies of compositional law . . . in order to guide all eyes to every facial detail of her, Marie's, transformation, Joan's; he loved her "to death", like they say -- and gave her/him immortality.

He would, and very nearly did, have it perfect for her . . . each half-inch of light . . . each 35mm frame, then, cut to perfection -- ah yes!, The Editor in him, even, did his dance at the last.

(As Hans would have it, of him):

("Now look through the glass, Gerda!" he said. Every snowflake was magnified and looked like a lovely flower or a sharply pointed star.

("Do you see how cleverly they are made?" said Kay. "Much more interesting than looking at real flowers and there is not a flaw in them. They are perfect. If only they would not melt!"")

And The Poet of him, up against all that 'writer's cramp' of "reality", would drive her crazy -- to insanity wherein "the real" is, once again, what-you-make-it . . . just as it became for Artaud when The Poet within him drove him to a madhouse several years later -- (as was the case with many poets, thus, up against all such sickness of those Times as took "the news" as "The real": :"the new" as 'the new': :"real" as 'real': :etc.)

See him, Carl, threatening to actually cut off all Marie's lovely hair -- her crying, for "real", then, in threat of shears -- him, Carl, castrating himself/her, Joan: watch him, Theodore, actually setting the fire under her, Joan . . . Marie's terror, then, for "real" . . . flames burning her, Joan, again and again in film's endless ritual beyond Time's measure:

watch, therefore -- with incredible care -- this most contemporary man, this Dreyer . . . the terrible clockwork of him vaulting heavenward with burning poet wings -- this moth whirl of thought about the moving picture light: it is your inevitable flight, of The Times, as well as his/hers: :Marie's/Joan's -- whose fates were inextricably beyond him . . . he but the boy/Carl who struck the match -- the gift of God: she but the queen bee, of all 19th century societal hive -- she but the victim of her own illusion . . . not his . . . not Joan's -- dead these 500 years, thank God! . . . as she did: she/Marie, as Joan or any other she would play -- in hopes of soul? -- as powerless as a flake of snow.

("Look! The white bees are swarming," said the old grandmother.

("Have they a queen bee too?" asked the little boy, for he knew that there was a queen among the real bees.

("Yes, indeed they have," said the grandmother. "She flies where the swarm is thickest. She is the biggest of them all and she never remains on the ground. She always flies up again to the sky. Many a winter's night she flies through the streets and peeps in at the windows, and then the ice freezes on the panes into wonderful patterns like flowers."

("Oh yes, we have seen that," said both children, and then they know it was true.

("Can the Snow Queen come in here?" asked the little girl.

("Just let her come," said the boy, "and I will put her on the stove, where she will melt.")

Carl Theodore Dreyer wishing that when it was over it was over and done! -- that when it was undone it was-to-be clearly undone . . . as in Romanticism -- that when it was finished it was polished to show every grain-of-Truth underneath the surface . . . as is so in all Baroque -- that when it was there it was there-to-stay in absolute schism from Reality . . . as in Classicism -- in ultimate Eternity, then, now/then . . . as is 'a classic's' way: poor Dreyer then when 'stuck with' film: :a medium ephemeral as its name: :a veil of light (aflame in his "Jeanne D' Arc): in his next film ("Vampyr") he 'went for' something more Baroque: :smoke -- seeking something more solid than Joan . . . the white-white-WHITE of his adoration of her which had driven him mad: oh, she/Marie, got the realistic brunt of it, alright! --: but he, too, suffered 'no end' of madness . . . as is the case in all such worship of woman -- he, too, never again entirely sane, after Joan . . . on-and-off in asylum, himself, again and again, the rest of his life: but he had a hope, so to speak -- "a prayer", like they say . . . a chance to succeed himself, where all others had failed -- to 'turn back the clock' of all such romantic thought as would hatch a saint, or a movie star . . . to undo all adoration of witch as was in him -- of woman herself.

(He felt this way about it, as Hans once put it, to be sure!):

("Are you still cold?" she asked and kissed him on the forehead. Ugh! it was colder than ice. It went to his very heart, which was already more than half ice. He felt as if he were dying, but only for a moment, and then it seemed to have done him good. He no longer felt the cold . . .

("Now I mustn't kiss you any more," she said, "or I should kiss you to death!"

(Kay looked at her and she was so pretty! A cleverer, more beautiful face could hardly be imagined. She did not seem to be made of ice now, as she was when she waved her hand to him from outside the window. In his eyes she was wuite perfect, and he was not a bit afraid of her. He told her that he could do mental arithmetic as far as fractions, and that he knew the number of square miles and the number of inhabitants of the country. She always smiled at him, and he then thought that he surely did not know enough; and he looked up into the wide expanse of heaven, into which they rose higher and higher as she flew with him on a dark cloud, while the storm surged around them, the wind ringing in their ears like well-known old songs.)

Thus next, then, he turned to legends of horrors grown out of middle-European folklore and given romantic focus in Sheridan le Fanu's book: "In a Glass Darkly": yes! -- in St. Paul's literary metaphor we begin to see, as he saw, all thought of Vampire (creature who'll reflect in no visual mirror) take shape thru story . . . take shape in the night of Dreyer's mind, then, as photographic smoke -- as that part of the film's emulsion unexposed to light -- that part the laboratory cannot develop into anything but a solid shape . . . a 'cut-out' lacking all details of life-likeness . . . all recognizable feature -- that part, of all photography, that gets hypo'ed, at the Lab., to be an absolute . . . 'fixed', therefore 'eternity', as a 'blank' . . . moving shades of something interfering with all light -- shades of black: even this, in the making of the film, he would contradict -- there being no absolute dark anywhere throughout "Vampyr" . . . only tendencies toward any such -- shades of photo-smoke, mists, blacks-of-dress, shadows, underexposures of all object . . . every subjective detail as-if 'about-to-be' crowded-out by encroaching dark . . . each recognizable object subject to the continual threat of black -- all image, then/therefore, obscure as folklore itself and/or any literary description of, say, "evil". . . i.e., what can only exist in the mind of man . . . what cannot be seen: he'd photograph invisibility, then -- and he did!

His every move, in the make of this film, was contradiction -- contrary to The Writer, in himself, 'the reporter'/'recorder', even: he'd not get at Fact (as a journalist might) or at Truth either, herewith, but, rather (as Film-maker), get at Untruth's absolute power over both mind and material body: this film would be . . . as it is! . . . a journalist's Black Mass (opposite, thus, to all other 'spook movies' in the history of film, inasmuch as they seek with every dramatic 'trick in the bag' to engender Belief in the news-reality of some monster or other -- some super-nature, as only the 'realism' of moving pictures can seen-to-be -- whereas Dreyer's "Vampyr" is a parody of "Belief", itself . . . thus pure blasphemy against camera-as-God from beginning to end.)

Its other title: "The Strange Adventures of David Gray": gives us true sense, at start, of the mock-of-hero intended -- as much as to say: "the adventure of Mr. Blur" or "Blah". . . "David Non-entity", then -- common man as colorless creature . . . or, simply, creature-of-film's dulled emulsion: he even spelled "vampire": :"v * a * m * p * y * r" -- to set his symbol-of-evil apart from all other.

Almost all 'actors' in the film were 'amateurs' -- only the old master-vampire and his feminine-victim (turned vampire, then too) were 'professionals' in any dramatic sense. David Gray, the common-man 'hero' was Baron de Gunsburg, exiled Russian aristocrat (uncommon enough to end-up, years later, senior editor of "Vogue"): Carl found him, his blasphemy's hero, at a Count's masquerade ball in 1929 Paris -- picked him, that night, for the part. For 'the wickedest woman' of the story's plot, he picked a "sweet old lady", as everyone knew her -- for his 'heroine' . . . a "bitch", by everyone's account. Do you begin to see how it went?

For cameraman of this fantasy, he chose France's best 'realist' -such: Rudolf Mate: who'd worked with him on 'Joan' -- "cinematographer par excellence", as it's called . . . then stuck his lenses in an endless fog -- directed every shot to look as crude as 'home movies' would: he insisted each object, from chateau to grave, be real . . . even the vampire book, in the film, authentic . . . , then slanted every sight to give the sense each prop was phony as Hell -- lighted every scene to make them look as-if composed-of studio 'flats'. All evening shots were photographed at dawn: :etcetera: :vice-versa triumphant!

The sound-track, added later to make this his first 'talky'-movie, contradicted itself, thus, too: human speech, unneccessary to its 'silent' movie plot, often degenerated into animal grunts -- emotional sound-effects . . . as when the master-vampire (supposed by horror-movie audiences to be immortal) dies, smothered by grain (a trick stolen from Griffith's "A Corner In Wheat") muttering: "I don't want to die!": in such a way that the language degenerates into a series of desperate 'barks', as the white wheat covers him up: "Arg - rarh - rargh - a - rah!": whereas the background of human converse, on the track, is continually pierced by animal cries -- cock crows, barking dogs, parrot shrieks, etc. . . these done by professional imitators -- human beings imitating such sounds, in the recording studio (and sounding as such to any listening ear).

Oh! -- the film was clearly made not to 'scare' . . . but, rather, to reward all attention to it (as never before, or after, in the history of the horror film) with 'awareness' of the whole bag of superstition's tricks -- each act an obvious 'fake', carrying the antidote to any 'belief' in it in its 'pun' upon itself . . . as when the 'heroine', already vampire-bit, wakes up to smile at her sister and then broadens her smile to include her fangs (the film's most frightening shot, and its most 'acted' one, thus a pun upon love's want -- not, in any sense, superstition's fright) . . . or, for instance, when the hero is encoffined and the camera takes his place, for spectator's first-person ride to the grave, all 'identification' with David Gray (such as would have made the scene 'scary' for identifying audiences) is deliberately "tossed-away" by Dreyer -- lost in an intellectual play with David's 'double' (superimposition) stepping aside to watch you/(camera)/him in a tomb (obviously) of the imagination.

The game of this film is rich with a wit like this:

"I met a man upon the stair ...
a little man who wasn't there.
He wasn't there again today.
I wish to Hell he'd go away."

Thus "Vampyr" is one of the greatest comedies ever filmically made -- its humor as sweet as a nursery rhyme . . . and as terrifying, too -- a smile with fangs (but certainly no 'horror film' as commerce would have it: everyone scared half-to-death in ritual belief -- thus caught in endless repetition . . . stuck for endless tickets at theatre door, church door, newspaper's more-and-more terror) oh!, No! -- "Vampyr" is an end-in-itself . . . if you can but see it as such -- if you can but see it as he made it beautifully be!

He did essentially the same thing, a decade later, for "Day of Wrath" and "Ordet" -- exposing Christianity's witch-tricks in the former and the magic spell of Christian see-er in the latter . . . both based on dramatic plays, of a conventional Scandanavian nature, yet as Baroque as "Vampyr" in their filmic make-up -- as 'nursery rhyming' in their visual terror: all three can, I think, best be seen as-if made by Hans Christian Andersen as a 20th century film-maker (that perilous charm of Hans would certainly have come to this, if he had been born fifty years later . . . this Christian who yearned to be an opera star, 'settled-for' novelist's fame, and got stuck finally as literary baby-sitter -- which he was best-at), as Carl, "gift of God", Dreyer, yearning to be top moralist, settling for 'entertainer', got stuck with Art -- poor contemporary bastard!

He'd show Art, then, what a 'wooden-nickle' it is in his "Day of Wrath" -- each scene of it shot in blatent imitation of Dutch 'religious' and 'genre' painting . . . from Rembrandt to the worst of them -- he chased his 17th century Danish witches thru a vertible museum of black & white Holland art . . . a mise-en-scene that said "art-art-ART" at every camera turn -- and burned this "Dies Irae" witch at a Protestant stake . . . whereat she found no hope of heavenly saving grace, nor any later sainthood, either: that these scenes of religious 'quackery' occur in the chiaroscuro of Rembrandt's and Vermeer's domain -- and are thus composed of painterly sacredness . . . these scenes wherein even an untortured witch's confession, at end, is a 'fake' -- does make its Black Mass a blaspheme against aesthetics . . . as he meant it -- does expose the whole paintpot as the trap, of sensibility, it is as sure as church: (you have to but look at the 'stills' of this film, and remember that Carl's an original man, to realize the terrible parody going-on herein: (yet if none have so-seen this film's nursery pun upon Art it is because all eyes of this Time are so-trapped in it/Art-as-church.)

"Ordet", meaning: "The Word": came several years after: all scene was sparse, as he would have it ('home movies' again, as in "Vampyr" -- but with a vengence, a stillness) . . . language having its "day of wrath" and blessings (the parody that this portrait of a seer and his surroundings, should, could only, occur in a world of words almost totally devoid of visual Visions) -- the religious sense Kierkegaardian . . . the director's eye a slightly shifting guiding-sight which leads all thought to: "The Word": : "Belief": which finally pulls-off the oldest trick-in-the-trade of speech: raises 'the dead'.

Oh God, old Dreyer, half-mad, 'pulling your leg', plucking-the-sleeve, finally leading all sensibility by the camera hand -- streetwalker Carl . . . poor beggar -- sweet child: Carl Theodore Dreyer growing old --

trapped beyond his own wrathful thought by perfection's wish . . . by the need of money to fulfill it -- by Art, thus: tough 'old bird' in his mind . . . making the most childish fables, Grim grusome, come visually true, to even a happy ending -- in "Ordet" -- as Hans Christian Andersen would have had it:

('He went about dragging some sharp flat pieces of ice which he placed in all sorts of patterns, trying to make something out of them . . .

('Kay's patterns were most ingenious, because they were the "Ice Puzzles of Reason." In his eyes they were excellent and of the greatest importance: this was because of the grain of glass still in his eye. He made many patterns forming words, but he never could find the right way to place them for one particular word, a word he was most anxious to make. It was "Eternity." The Snow Queen had said to him that if he could find out this word he should be his own master, and she would give him the whole world and a pair of new skates. But he could not discover it.')

He hardly knew himself, anymore, what he was after . . . anymore than as a child quite lost in play -- so given-over to the game, the art, as to scare himself yet laugh: (but audiences never saw the humor, anymore than adults see the irony of serious children.)

Dreyer finally came to want to 'do' "The Life of Christ" -- came to The U.S. and asked President Truman, at a Washington cocktail party, for a million dollars (or was it someone other, among the hundreds he insisted must help him? . . . was it more than a million he'd asked-for?) -- because The United States was World's foremost Christian nation (or was it because The U.S. was The Kingdom of The Jews, in his imagination? . . . or just because it was the richest country on earth?) -- and then he'd said he wanted to film it in Jerusalem (was that Arab? . . . or Israelian?) -- and he wanted, yes, to film it in eternal Jerusalem . . . and he ended his U.S. trip in a madhouse -- went back to Denmark without a penny.

Years passed: and most forgot Carl Theodore Dreyer: for awhile, it was rumoured, he was a bar-tender: but he didn't believe it: and then came "Gertrude", 'out of the blue' of his legend: and he achieved, with it/her/"Gertrude" the classic his whole life was made-for -- achieved "classicism", at last, in film, of all mediums . . . (in the sense Donald Sutherland defines "classicism", thus: "Classicism is based on presence. It does not consider that it has come or that it will go away; it merely proposes to be there where it is. It is; or, like God, so it affirms"): to make a work-of-art that can be defined as such, can simply be, then, were surely more than one might expect of Hans Christian Andersen in any form of him: yet Hands, it was, who predicted exactly how it might happen to "Kay" -- foretold, for Carl, then, the way in which it finally did in his, thus, predestined living:

('Kay sat quite alone in all those many miles of empty ice halls. He looked at his bits of ice and thought and thought, till something gave way within him. He sat so stiff and immovable that one might have thought he was frozen to death.

('Then it was that little Gerda walked into the palace, through the great gates in a biting wind. She said her evening prayer, and the wind dropped as if lulled to sleep, and she walked on into the big empty hall. She saw Kay and knew him at once. She flung her arms round his neck, held him fast, and cried, "Kay, little Kay, have I found you at last?"

('But he sat still, rigid and cold.

('Then little Gerda shed hot tears. They fell upon his breast and penetrated to his heart. Here they thawed the lump of ice and melted the little bit of the mirror which was in it. He looked at her, and she sang.')

He thought, when he began "Gertrude", he was taking on all Culture, in this film, for paradoxical play (as he had Art in 'Day's Wrath' and all-such folk-Belief via language as "In the beginning was The Word" as, thus, in "Ordet") -- specifically intended the whole Culture trap of turn-of-the-century Stockholm to be sprung, herein this adaptation of a play written then, to a perfect visability . . . (he wished, for instance, to make it in color and have, as consultant, Adolf Hallman who'd published a book called "The Stockholm Society" in 1910); and he was, from scratch, after that sense of Culture as conscious habit (as Ezra Pound defines Culture as what's left after you've forgot what you set out to learn): but "Gertrude" herself (or was it the ghost of Maria von Platen, after whom the play's 'heroine' was patterned?) entered the heart of his thought; and she 'stole the show' from him, thru him, as surely as if she were living woman; and she stopped all parody in him -- all morality even . . . made him love her beyond any critical measure -- made "Gertrude", the film of her, the greatest declaration of love of woman in the history of the medium.

(It is, perhaps, almost impossible for most to know how an artist may love a woman of his imagination as physically as if he were in touch with her flesh -- she having 'a life of her own' acting upon him, as surely as if she were moving in a world outside his mind . . . this being the exact state of all creative activity in him -- The Muse, herself, The Queen of this domain . . . not him, Man, certainly not! -- except as he loves Her: yet each human being shares this same Myth with every infatuation . . . most simply unable to admit it -- too terrible this fact that "one's true love" cannot be other than one's own thought always desperately adjusting to flesh, always caught in the cultural trap of one's own habitual loneliness: The Artist sometimes breaks-out of such habit as all "flesh is heir to" by letting the woman of his imagination -- his Muse -- have a life of her own IN him . . . and ever after, then . . . for all Eternity.):

('He kept tight hold of Gerda, who laughed and cried for joy. Their happiness was so heavenly that even the bits of ice danced for joy around them. And when they settled down, there they lay in just the very position the Snow Queen had told Kay he must find out, if he was to become his own master and have the whole world and a new pair of skates.

('Gerda kissed his cheeks and they grew rosy. She kissed his eyes and they shone like hers. She kissed his hands and his feet and he became well and strong. The Snow Queen might come home whenever she liked; his order of release was written there in shining letters of ice.')

The Baron de Gunzburg recalled, about Carl, that, when the camera was turned on, his face always began to glow and then turned red and yet more and more burning red, until mechanical end of shot: can you imagine any but the most loving woman in the world being mistress to such a man? ; and can you, then, begin to know what "Gertrude" was to him?

How lovingly he wrote a new ending for the Soderberg play -- which he'd wanted to film since 1920 . . . I mean, he'd always had it in him, this love of her which he finally fully came to realize in this film -- himself, then an old man, writing a scene imagining her, dear "Gertrude", his age . . . life having passed her by -- herself, in the scene, returning a packet of love letters to her lover, him then . . . Carl Theodore Dreyer having waited so long for her -- she in him . . . having searched with such terror and final mockery among the saints and witches of his frozen imagination before finally finding her -- before falling in love, then.

The film "Gertrude" was completed in 1964: and Carl Theodore Dreyer died several years after: at the very last of his life he was still wishing to do "the Christ film" and an adaptation of Euripides "Medea."

"In modern or classic form?" asked an interviewer in 1966.

"Classic", he said.

[note: this is the third of the Brakhage Lectures. The first, on Méliès, appeared in Caterpillar #11, and the second, on Griffith, appeared in #13. The fourth, and final Lecture, of this series, on Eisenstein, will appear in Caterpillar #15 this spring.]

William Lane: THREE FOR D. H.

1

You are away now, travelling.
Mining, I think, the black earth now
of the coast, for bones and jewels
indications winds locked in shells
tossed from the sea:
you were tossed from the sea once yourself
a baby animal with fat hands grasping
air.

Now your hands fondle the wheel of a car
as the tires sing in an ecstacy of turning.
But I know you remember the sea.
In your eyes I have seen the sun emerging
behind the lifting and falling waters.
In your voice as we pass the wine bottle
late at night I hear doors opening and closing
I feel worlds brilliant and shifting ideas
translucent birds lit by the sun
in its going down
golden .
from the sun

Now you're travelling. Where are you?
Does the night hold you now as it holds me?
I sit in my room.
I stare down into a glass of water
and I see the moon, shimmering.

2

Now is the time, poet.
Spirits are alive in wooden shoes
on the scaffoldings of the mind
clopping back and forth.
Or climbing ladders there
dead men hesitate and watch us, critically.
Now is the time, poet.   Listen.
They are yourself.   Hear the shifting of feet
on the rungs.
Hear the strange, persistent clopping.
They are yourself.   Listen.
Watch them.   The dead man
raises his stiff middle finger

                                        for you.

3

Because I love women
I love the sunlight
and sunlight is what we
better have shine   through
the scrawled lines of words
we write

my friend, poet with eyes.

SUNLIGHT.   I would stamp this word sunlight
             on the back of your hand.
             I would say   look!
                 the sun is rising
               have you seen the wings of birds
                 lit by it
                          just so?

* * * * *

I have no answers/but have had three women.
Each walked differently in the morning sun.
The first, a queen, talked strange
and dreamt of disappearing like new fallen rain.
The other two were human and had eyes
more.
You liked the way they moved and the sun in their hair
was
what you told them about.
And I would tell you now
though it be sometimes night
the sun will rise the sun does rise THIS
is no prophecy but the
FACT that encloses and forgives us.
Look! the three or six women we've loved
have changed us and the sunlight is
part of the change
We see the sunrise differently
We see differently now

* * * * *

O, walking the beach, wear the sunlight as if it were clothes.
Dance, if that's your way of praising
Sing, if you can
the sea will always move I think
and the sun will always climb red and strange in the
[morning
and we will understand
none of it
but no matter
we are people made
to wear ourselves out building.

let's sing a song about girls.

Robert Kelly:

COMMENTARY ON BUSONI'S OPERA _DOKTOR FAUST_

Part One: Evocation of the Speeds

Evocation of the Speeds,
human response
how quick
("I am as quick as human thought",
a trick?
or learn to quicken it?)

landscape of the brain
is space,

a complex solid
mark the edges in red)
can be represented
as a theater,
the music's time
& words propose
(why not?)
the definitions.

Ich bin geschwind als wie des Menschen Gedanken!

all the other flames blow themselves out.

*

quick as,
this contract
sealed in blood

exactly _is_ your blood,
will only,
only
save you.

*

"how to make gold from sugar"

                                                  she said this music contained
for those who heard, heard this ritual right,
                                                  this transformation

*

The first contact is my blood,
my race that circles in my body,

limits, directs, proposes a transcendence
no flesh is heir to,
                                             can steal.

Can steal apples.
Cold milk of city mornings.
Bread from the baker's cart.
Can rob banks,
                                         water stocks,
peddle the true cross.

I can steal
beyond this blood.

*

They called them Lurs, or Luri,
who came up from Balushistan
(or so the records guessed)

& the great king gave them cattle
since they were cunning with cattle

ten thousand head, & the land to graze them,
money to settle in & build.

They went. In six months not one
of them remained, all gone

in thievish mystery, not one
cow left, slaughtered & feasted on,

sold out of hand, yoked to their
green carts marked with a big star.

*

Bronzes of Luristan.
A three-head god from Britain

looking back & forward & at hand,

the eyes, furtive sly
eyes of the thief we must become.

*

Nothin doin.
Three faces that are my face,

I sat up late sketching a dream house,
house with a tower.

What is a tower?
A tower rises & falls.
What kind of man builds a tower?

A man who feels that time is on him, will lift him
& let him fall back

(Simon Magus on the mosaic piazza,
his body smashed
into the geometric pattern.)

The house stays dream, the tower
rises & falls between my legs.

Build the house you find in your blood,

sealed with blood.

Or accept the tower with its perpetual fall.

Maybe the tower images our fire,
going up & coming down & what it
begets
on its way down,
pyramid,
tetrahedron = fire.
Doubled cube = earth transcended.
Altars of magic.
Or die into the child,
Child of Fire

by the human will
(the power understood
that drives the blood)

Part Two: The Duchess of Parma

Eyelids heavy with daydream,
fantasy she never ends,

the girl's life
in thrall (as the old books say)
to the spirit of the woods.

These are the faces I see every day,
procession of dwarves & tumblers,
high tenors with huge chests & tiny waists,

song of the ants,
a room full of parrots,
a river of
small mammals,
mice with antlers,
musk creatures all colors, cloven-hoofed,

& the men!
& the women they propose to be!

*

And now she walks in his spell,
in love with his power.
This love
impure --- her weakness craves
to share his power. Yet all love,
Socrates, desires what it lacks,
what it is not.

So love is weak,
poppied with daydream,
& she will be Queen
of his preposterous kingdom,
holy kingdom of his will.

*

This means to bear his child.

*

She is in love with the woman she must become,
& all her hate is what she's been.

This is enchantment. She is pregnant already
though she still stands beside her powerless husband

waiting for her lover to pounce from the sky & make her the sky.

*

In Turkey they gash the unopened buds
then come back later through the fields
with a small heavy wooden oblong block
(ancestral---father's datum to son)
& squeeze into its deep hollow socket
all the ooze along the gash---
it gets stickier as it dries in air.
At the end of the day, or a long row,
they ball the stuff in their hands,
compress it gently & bring the com-
pacted masses, five or six at a time,
to market.

*

This dream I give you
lasts longer than the world.

*

A taunt of power. If it held her
(it will not hold her)

or if the springtime, coming down
over Lago di Garda, could touch her

(but her child is winter,
snow between her thighs.

Part Three: Essay on Will

To find all things in the texture of the living day---
it goes hardest with me when the wind dies down
or when for days this valley knows no wind. I know
what the wind is. I point to my head with my thumb.
I live to know, & all I know is eye of hurricane.
I want the stillest knowledge, to make the wind rage.
I point to my head with my thumb though all my body
studies the intricate day. My self gives off a poison
the moving air must take away. I point to my skull
with middle finger, my thumb touches occiput.
I have spanned the universe that understands.
Between my fingers. Shake my head. The roaring lion
of the chemists is not just cock, it is this fire
that never stops, world fuel, my life its oxygen
but I stare at the flicker too much, hypnotized, too
little try to see by its light, by the light of it.
So ring finger & ear finger point to my eyes or my eyes
look down their lines, through veins of the hand, nerves
of the arm, shoulder, neck, into the fiery head, past
the fire, line of sight, to what the blaze illuminates.
The one finger left points at the world to do my will therein.

Part Four: Sarabande

Nine nights attention
five nights gloom,

                                                  the moon
            opened over the roof,

                                                                          it's worth
the climb, to stand in the dark
at the top of the staircase,
                                                                                close air of the
                                                                          upper house,

& watch the moon
                          rise over the ash tree, over the cornel
                                                         past flowering now but still

assigned to the moon,

                                                                  logic
                                                   of our intercourse.

/continues/

ANTIGONE. GRISELIDIS. IPHIGENEIA -- CONDUIRAMOUR. DULCINEA. CLELIA. PRINCESSE DESIREE -- HESIONE. HERO. VIVIAN -- CLARA D'ELLEBEUSE. PENTHESILEA. ATHENA -- MIREILLE. NAUSICAA. VIRGINIA. ELECTRA -- IO. IRIS. TARPEIA -- RAMI. CELUTA. GALATEA. EGEREA -- GRAZIELLA. PAMELA. TISIPHONE -- CASSANDRA. MORGANA. MIRANDA. KAROMAMA. ASAZUMA -- SERAPHITA. ARIADNE. IMOGENE. BRISEIS -- ATALANTA. CALLISTO. MARPHISA. DIDO. ARETHUSA -- MELUSINE. URANIA. LACHESIS -- BERENICE. JULIET. MARGUERITE -- THE ATLANTIDES. THE OREADES. THE PLEIADES -- DEBORAH. HEBE. OMPHALE. ALCESTIS. EUROPA -- ELOA. HELOISE. CHLOE -- THE DAUGHTERS OF ATLAS -- ANDROMEDA. MINERVA. AGNES. ALDEGONDA. MEDUSA -- RUTH. ANGELICA. CALYPSO. THALESTRIS -- CINDERELLA. ARACHNE. BRUNHILD -- SNOW WHITE -- VELEDA. NATACHA. ELEANOR -- MARIE DE SOMBREUIL. INEZ DE CASTRO. JUANA INEZ DE LA CRUZ -- CHRYSEIS. DELILAH. ANGIOLA OF FOLIGNO -- THE YOUNG FATE. GLADYS SPENCER. THE RHINE DAUGHTERS. THE FLOWER GIRLS. SLEEPING BEAUTY -- KUNDRY. LINDINALVA. MARIE DES ROIS -- LA PETITE FADETTE.COSETTE. FINETTE CENDRON. BELLE-BELLE -- THE MAID OF ORLEANS -- TESSA. ARTEMIS. ROSAMOND. ESMERALDA -- COLOMBA. OPHELIA. KITTY BELL -- CECILIA. BRUNHILDA. TERESA OF AVILA -- JANE EYRE. ANNE BOLEYN. CYMODOCEA. JUDITH -- LAURA. MILA. IGNORANTINA. ALCEA. ROSINA -- CLAUDINE. EMILY BRONTE. ALICE IN WONDERLAND -- THE ERYNNIES. CLARISSA HARLOWE. COLOMBINELLA -- ELVIRA. BEATRIX CENCI. LOUISE MICHEL. THE GIRL FROM TARANTO -- THE BACCHANTES. THE DANAIDES. THE ERGASTINES -- PERSEPHONE. MARIA OF AGREDA -- THE VESTAL VIRGINS. LA BELLE AUDE -- ISOLDE OF THE WHITE HAND -- ANGELA. BRADAMANTE. BERNADOTTE OF LOURDES -- THE LOVELY SULAMITE. THE ROSE OF SHARON. LILY OF THE VALLEY -- HERMIONE. FLORA. ASTRAEA. ATALA. MELISANDE -- AGUSTINA OF ARAGON. LIGEIA. AURELIA. KAMURO. AURORA -- MARTHA AND MARY. SOPHIA -- VIRGINIA DARE. KATCHEN. GIACINTA -- VANINA VANINI.

Thomas Meyer:

THE UMBRELLA OF AESCULAPIUS

with Topoi & Commentary

in memory of Giulio Camilo

Augustine confesses:

In the plains, caves, caverns
of my memory are
innumerable things,

images, arts,
bodies, presences,
notions, impressions,
the mind's affection;

what thought can't feel
the memory keeps

& keeps in mind as well;

I run, I fly
over them all
this side & that
as far as I can

& there is no end.

I wanted to write a poem whose pace was stately & deliberate, whose reader moved as a witness, & whose lines, in clusters, revealed groups of figures in well lit niches. Such a movement coupled with such a spectacle I reasoned would impress the memory, which is to say the soul, of the reader. The classical sons of this & related arts teach us that that end may be reached by the use of the unforgettable: an extreme, or more subtly, a small but striking detail, blood stained shirt, wall-eye, or crooked finger. A hand above the fifth of the series & a cross above the tenth, these indicate order. I have abandoned them being unsure that I could truly indicate the fifth or tenth of any series. Who knows what has dropped out, drops out & is lost every time we blink an eye. I am left with the following in what seems a plausible order. They are shadow boxes, *loci*, or *topoi*, the stations of memory. What I wanted from them was nothing more or less than Giordano Bruno asked of his magic figures, or the Imagists in 1910 demanded of a poem. Honey tongued Simonides, the first professional poet, invented memory as a livelihood, the means of all men's salvation depends upon it as well. It is wicked to speak of poems like this, but then the memories in them are not mine alone. I have provided commentaries. Love demands I let no man move here alone.

Evans found them chatting,
fresh from their elaborate toilet,
hair frisé, wound around their heads,
tumbling down their backs
twisted with beads & jewels . . .

"but these are Parisians," these
ladies of Knossos
restored by Gilliéron.

That was in 1901. Their skirts were striped & colorful.

Protect the Keftiu, Isis,

death defying goddess
(athanata)
& quicken their hearts with aphrodisiacs.

Her popularity spread widely until she swallowed all the other gods & goddesses of Aegypt, surrounding territories, & periplus. The liberty here, glossed as such, is that she is actually less, or without death, rather than the defier of it, which one would suspect as well. Aphrodisiacs is a triple pun. Aphrodite was swallowed as well. Aphrodisiacs are swallowed by her followers who go by the same name.

Gorgon-headed candied sea holly
has an adder's hue,
eyes & nose

that make a man a mirror

& when you gather it
(root & wort)
let no sun
shine on it

(light steals the color of its power).

Cut it with hard crooked iron,
turning away: unseen, unharmed.

With it you walk no evil path,
bad men turn & run, give way.

These are eryngoes. The power of this wort is never named as such here, but then we are never told who or what a gorgon is, in the same way we are expected to know that the North Star was sacred to Isis.

Her sistrum struck:

let joy & love attend
this toilet.
                    Enter
cosmetic mistress,
merriment & music,
sovereign of
                    song & dance.

The sound of this instrument protected all those in ear range.

Up to Luper's altar
they led
          the boys

& touched their brows
with bloody blades
& wiped dark's mark away
with milk soaked
                    wool wads.

The Lupercalia survives today in the sending of Valentines. Cupid's arrow shot through a blood red heart recalls a bleeding welt.

membris valens
skinned in Pan's black
Palantine valentine den

Pan & Luper are the same. They both despise clothing & demand nakedness at all times.

Bitter mother's sea star
protects travellers:

Pass fear's night & enter this eye,
        the most & least of paradise,

                what dust brings you
                to this entry, this vortex

The Sea Star is the compass point, the center of things as well as their entrance. The eye opens later. The dust is always there. The vortex reminds of 1927.

Uprooted, lofted, Ganymede,
spread-eagle,
spins in terror's
wing beat whirlwind.

The screaming revenger enters
his hard white,
succulent,
marble nates;

god seed animates, heats
cold stone.

Iron talons claw his downy Hellenic crotch,
the boy's loins caught, fondled
with feathery caresses.

Son of Tros,
manhood's joy,

you bear the nectar you take,
molten lust dribbles
down your alabaster legs,

your bright cup overflows, spills,
unlocks panic's heart.

The sacred company celebrates your service,
the sight of you
swaying through their number,
your teasing girdle displaying
slight cheek curves,
hints of secret curls,
sets fires.

Ganymede was an attractive lad taken for a ride by an eagle. He was so much in demand & his favors so chased that the gods decided to get into the act as well. Imagine him here as a late Hellenic statue, substantial & well crafted, suspended. This action is not suitable for a stately pace because it involves consummation & desire melting into affection.

A slim waisted Keftiu boy,
copper faced with comely thighs
in blue & gold
loin cloth
carries his rhyton through
Minoan halls,
full lipped & almond-eyed.

His beauty, grace & shape
dazzled the archaeologist's eyes,
& hid his secret below the belt.
Today this age celebrates
this mistake
& Psyche's night
finds us fumbling in the dark
handling light.

Keftiu were "island people from across the green seas." They steered by the stars & visited the Aegyptians often. The Larousse Gastronomique describes a rhyton as an antient drinking vessel shaped like a ram's horn, decorated sometimes with a goat's head, lacking a flat base so that a drinker was obliged to empty its contents before setting it down. Psyche had a memorable but short lived affair with Cupid. This mistake happened in 1900 when many feel the age's beginning happened as well.

Mistletoe grows
watered with the earth's tears.

Evil dreams disturb the Aesir's sleep,
bloody-eyed spooks walk around Balder's bed,

in distant Eastern forests
an aged giantess bears
a wolf brood,

a red sun stains the sky
& stars
like weary swallows at sea too long
drop & sink into the void.

Winter rushes with wind & wolves
through Valhalla's unpaid-for halls,
the walls crack like broken oaths,

as the world spoils it loses its shape.

Mistletoe was once the youngest of all things in creation, therefore not responsible for its actions. It was a common expression at the time to ask: "How's by Elves? How's by Aesir?" Balder was very beautiful. The Eastern forests were even darker when the light failed & died. Valhalla was never properly paid for, this created a great deal of ur-ill-feeling among the eldrich.

Heliopolitan priests have brought
an eagle with painted wings
                                                  & made
a spiced, palm branch nest
to burn him in alive.
                                        This fiery death
as insatiable as an infant eagle's maw
leaves ashes
                          as white as bone in the nest,
snow on the cliff-edge.

The Aegyptians had a festival for everything. When the sun moved into the center of Renaissance imagination these holidays came to light.

On the morning appointed
in dead winter,
sheep huddled in the road
between the hedges,

all who live
by the Dee's edge
put out their light & heat,
grew cold,

drew love's circle
near me, enchanted,
to undo the charm,

took turns, spun the wheel.
The bobbin's friction sparked
fallow straw with forlorn fire

to light a fir torch
that kindled the peat
where each man gathered
his hearth's new flame.

The Dee is a river down the road from where I live. Its name means "holy river" & means there is a goddess in its waters. It joins the Lune near here. In Aberdeen boys run about collecting "peat to burn the witches, please."
It is wise to get one's cattle in when the light fails,
out from under it.

Red ochre for life & strength
sprinkled over the bones
buried with
            chipped flint instruments,
            shells, & a chieftain's staff
            of reindeer horn carved with
            a stag on the run,

under each head a rock.

The dead have a cult of their own with numerous followers. This list does not mention the soul's double, a stone doll buried with the dead to insure that they will not come back. Protection must not be confused with celebration.

Dazed eyes,

glazed by daydream webbing
as if this bonny lass' s
sheer boyish beauty
were spun by Burne-Jones,
a silvery innocent,
Circe,
warms her hands at the blaze
kindled to consume her.

1722. (Near Dornoch.) She was the last witch burned in Scotland.

For moony silver, take one pennies weight of
white powder, fifty pennies weight of azloth
mixed with bronze & nitre;   heat & stir with
an iron rod.

Again, for sunny gold, do the same thing using
red powder.

& the Royal Society insisted:
    James Price prove your proven leechdom,
    ripen matter before our eyes,
    work a perfection & concoct
    an observable eternity.

& Dr Price agreed, gathered the members,
swallowed prussic (blue) acid, collapsed
    before their eyes, died

ars totum requirit hominem

1782. Art requires the total man. This can rightly be misread as Art asks a lot of people.

The air hums
vedas, eddas, sagas,
the lore receives
this man, the soul's periplus,
spiral entry,

Olson rests in the map of his true sight,
at the end of the world
where continents shift like vowels,
land gathers him up,
consonant energy.

1970. Words that remember a poet who died as the decade began.

ᚱᚨᛜᚨ · ᚱᛟᚲ · ᚱᛟᚲᚱ
glossed as follows:

ragna røk, røkr

Gods' doom, dusk

These or any other runes are never to be trusted. *Ragna* means powers or energies. *Røk* means fate, appointed or determined. *Røkr* was confused with *røk*, it means twilight or failing light, because its image was more memorable than *røk* the skalds slipped it in.

Niet:

I've been, am, will be
yet no man's drawn my net apart.
My shuttle wove the world,
I bore the sun before the born.

Neit's pride was swallowed by Isis in the *Golden Ass*.
She was a Libyan & often kept company with gorgons.

. . . clear stone,
crystalline eye,

Gorgon gift.

See following.

A pinch of dust outweighed the stone,
Alexander's rock,
black eye, yellow,
blind as terrible bats,
mute as mice as big as foxes;

dark night.

"Tell me wise Diogenes, what now?"

"You stand in my light."

Alexander was a famous man once, but tends to be lost in the shuffle now. People still remember Diogenes.

Near the world's end, where waters well
Dhul-Karnain's cook
washed a dried fish
in a certain spring, now lost

& in his hands
the hard black scales
silvered, shimmered, wriggled away,

the resilient white meat, once yellow sun baked,
the bones sprung back
slipped through his fingers,

light caught its escape,
danced in ripples:

moving image of eternity

The world's end is a place as well as an event that has occured an innumerable number of times.

This fish of wisdom's spawning ground
found
in the middle & early sixties
by the Danes.

& their disease,
the scales, leprous white,
blotched by rotten snows;

Miriam's anger
flows on Avalon's waters.

These are salmon who ate hazel nuts. Miriam became very angry with her brother when she found out he had married a Negro.

Old double-horns couldn't kill his green cook
when he didn't find the trusty fish's wonder water
again (now lost)
                    Antiochus Epiphanes threw him overboard,
the green siren still sings,
                                        pisces resurrected,

the most & least of paradise.

The cook swallowed where it slipped through his fingers.

What wort be brought,
which stone be struck ...

how goes a cure to cleanse this fish & set aright

these affairs.

This problem tends to be seasonal whether it is the fall of 1963 or the aeon of Aquarius.

Eternity's image moves, shifts
before our eyes
                    when we were blind
amazed, alarmed,
                    ensnared by dark corridors,

couriers brought torches.

This is the problem of focus & the trouble with orders. Although it is only a matter of sliding that makes the equinox occur a little off each year, it still confuses. Where do we lay our hands or set up our crosses? Before they brought a ball of string which led to the light, not the light itself.

The worm dreams of wings
                                        on greeny leaf.

& the young antient meets
the old hot foot abed

as if, scalded, he were
the patriarch Oedipus
near dead from the riddle unraveled

but for his bright eyes,
                                                    abode of the sun's chariot;

                                                    there the scintilla,
the spark of dark sight & spiral entry.

Mr Palmer & Mr Blake meet. These are said to have been real historical personages despite their presences. Blake is famous for his angels. Palmer is remembered for the visions that deserted him leaving in their wake a competent but less interesting sight. They returned late in Palmer's life. He serves as an inspiration to the young & inspired, as well as a warning.

Come Corybantes, sing
Aegyptian Albas
for the New
        Kingdom of Jerusalem.

The Corybantes are always on hand with their noisy, extravagant dances. Albas are sacred to Taum who is the sunset or sun before it rises. The New Kingdom in spite of everything else always turns out to be worth it.

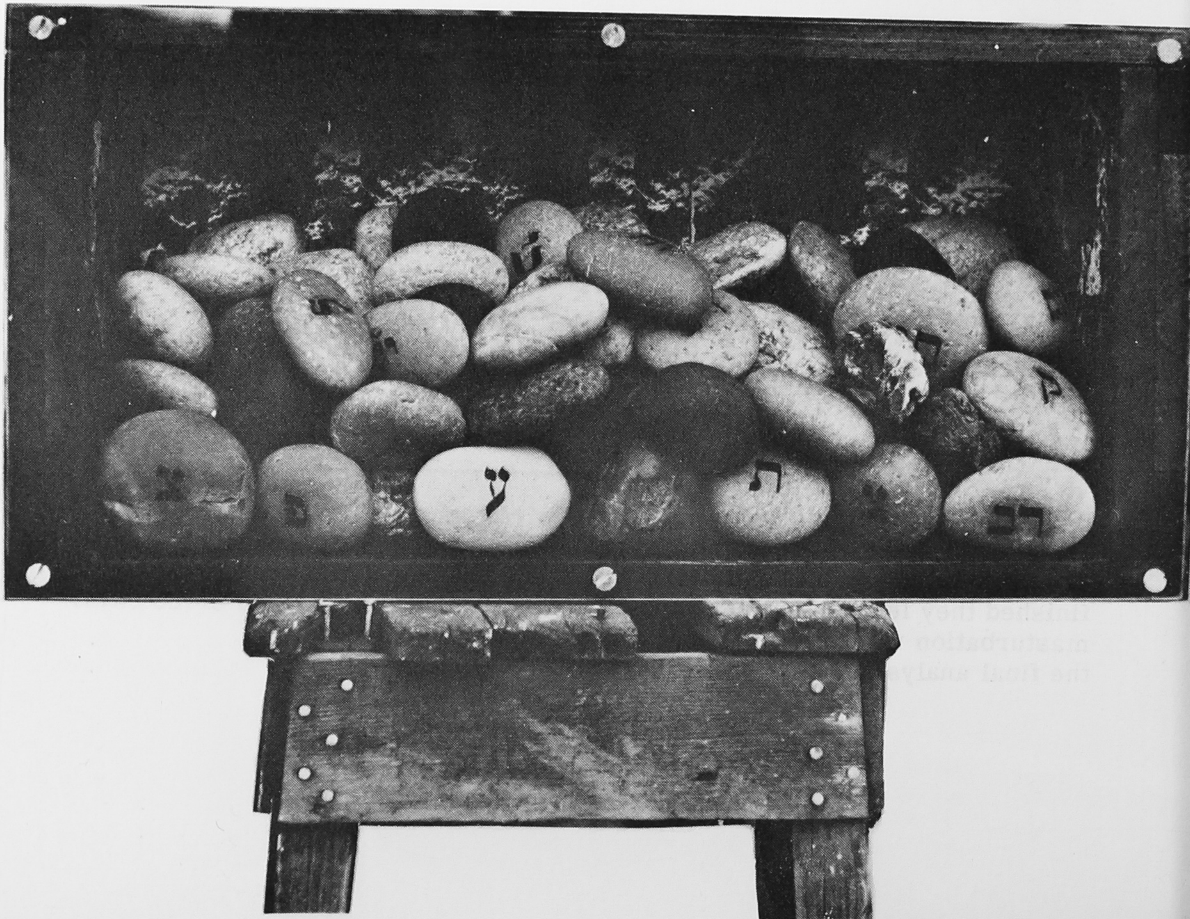
My starry belly bends above you
a thick white milky way explodes, flows
down your green knees, gathering
in your mossy navel, but
Shu my father separates our souls,
uncouples us at dawn.
Ra-Harakhte
rides across his land.

Jackals, falcons bear the scarab.
Dog-apes greet the sun.

Our hearts, torn apart, carry
the glimmering dream-wrought stone halved.

Only night can join this sun-split rock.

Sex for the Aegyptians was a ritual & desire was a preparation for death's Judgement Hall. They went about their business creating the image all Christians call heaven. When they had finished they left it. It must never be forgotten how important masturbation was to them; dying is a solitary occupation in the final analysis.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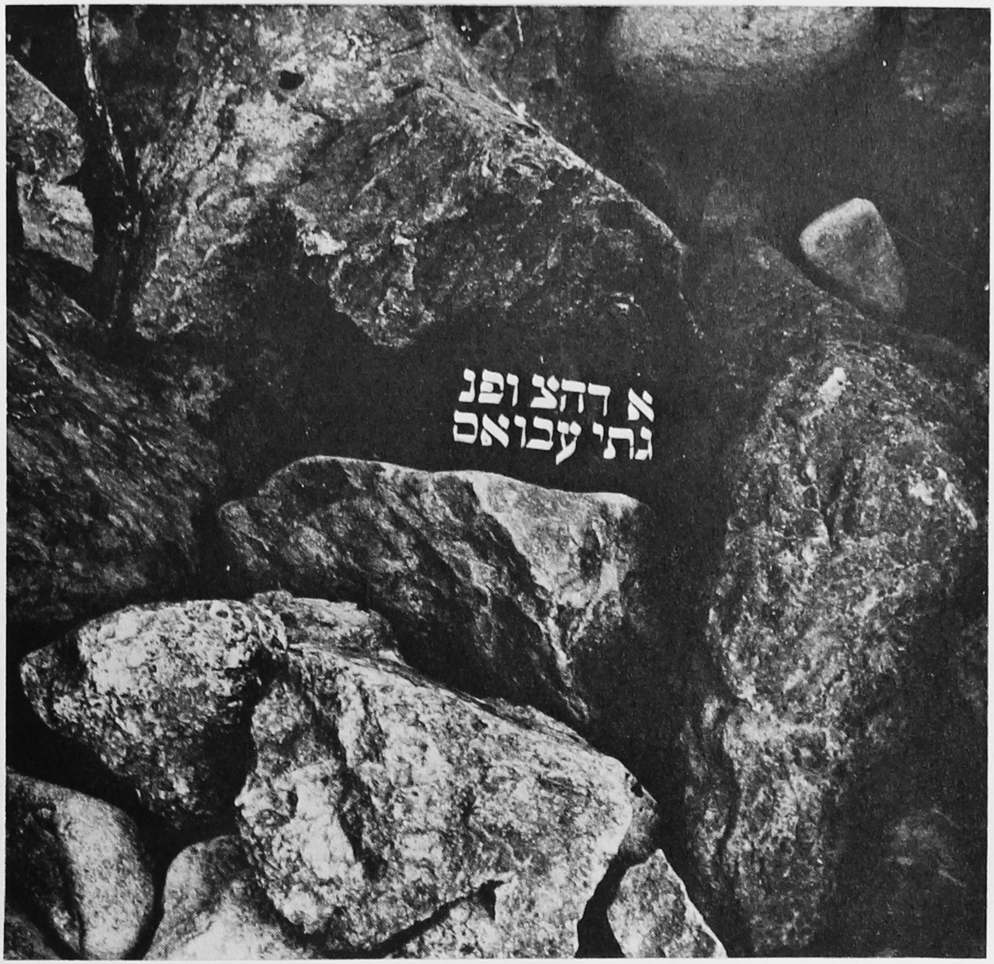
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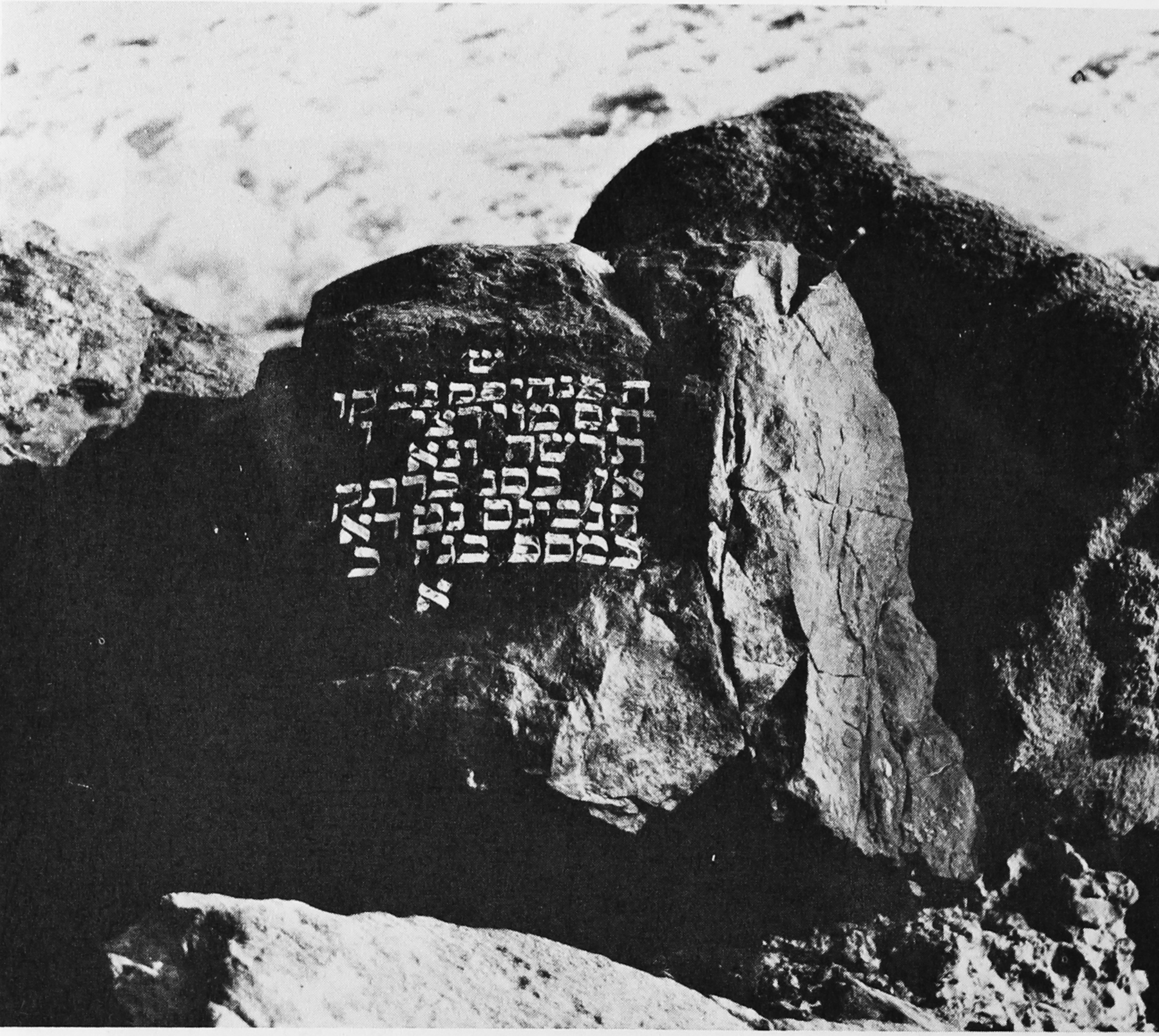

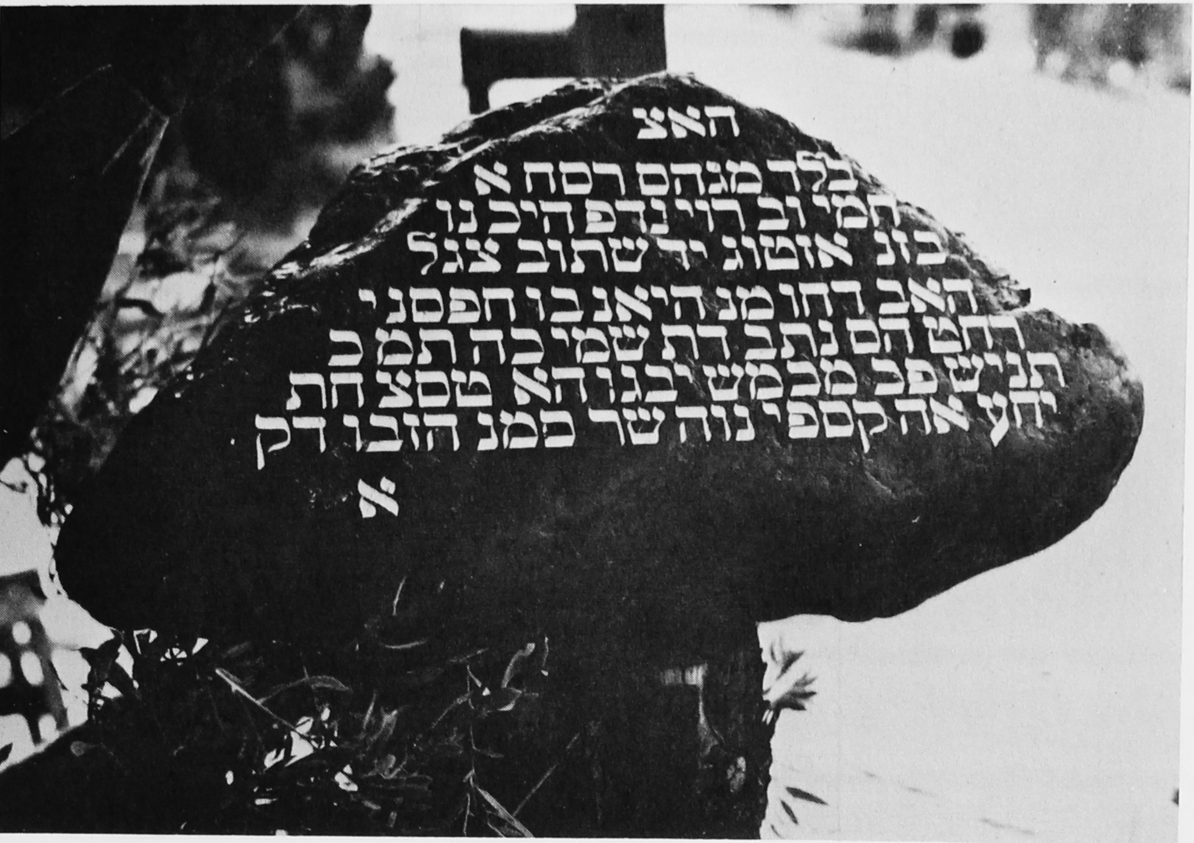
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בלד מגהס רסח א
חמי וב רוי נדפ היכ נר
כונ אוזטוג יד שתוב צגל
האב דחו מנ היאנ בו חפסנ י
דחט הס נתב דת שמי כה תמ כ
תנ יש פכ מכמש יבגו דא טסצ חת
יחע אה קספי נוה שר כמנ הזבו דק
א

Kenneth Irby:

(PARTS OF A POEM FOR MAX DOUGLAS)

*

Cy Leland
was all mastery

the closest poetry
came to that in Kansas

was Ironquill Ware

whose poetry "stinks"
said Malin, "yes, it stinks"

the smell was in my adolescent nose
I knew who lived in his old house

3 blocks on down my street
flapdoodle jingo verse, cut East to be

Commissioner of Pensions, wet
his wit flits yet above

some lunchcounter present
avatar of that high interview

the point is, exiles
and to reach from that, from your

St. Joe to present Lawrence
is a cut as far

and continental as the reach
to California

you were crossing south of the Pony Express
North of the Santa Fe trail, askew

from the Oregon utterly and at
right angles to Lewis and Clark

in your head, poor
lost Missouri Max, McClure

was born in Marysville
you were still

in the whirlpool of the continent

*

dear heart
dear heart   dear heart

the part of us gone out
in any weather

out on the Sonoma downs
after high October

circulates
spirits chase

"I cried when he drove off, even though
I was glad to see him go, I knew

he wouldn't talk to a soul
all the way back to St. Joe"

the darkness through which the winds blow
all the way back to earth

and the lonely heart alone
hears   "needle
          ease

ease
ease"

as Jed Smith heard
"beaver
 beaver

please, without
greed, Lord" ? Lord

in this heaven
grant them peace who pass

beyond Leavenworth
west

following the circulations
of the continent

peace, that's not just
rest, but breath, a piece

of all the action
Laurasia, passion

heat, meat
running in the streets

Sauer was born
in Warrenton

you followed him back
to Ratzel

down the tracks behind the tavern
looking for a place to piss

alone

it must have been hopeless
and what do the hopeless

do, but go on to, "What's
on the other side of despair?"

hair
the air of October

the breath blowing your spirit
back in my face

coming up the hill to winter
what space

where

dear heart dear
heart dear
heart

the roebuck leaps up
faultless manitou

we meet?

*

between the cemetery of Nortonville
and the Rushville grain elevator

the grain falling through the glycerine
the mustard seed falling through

the westward-facing heart
beat

germinates, the greenery
the crack left agap

to die out through
shows back, a flash of winter

intense green, after the first rains
out of the dun

does it?
in the space of a beer

swaller
you held your breath

in just plain desperation between
those Sunday points of Northeast Kansas

that isn't home
it's what the heart is given

to make home out of
Cy Leland

also was a quiet man
White thought that of him

virtue, Malin said

he was only a *local*

boss
not master of the state

he lived a long, long time
all the glaciated past

of politics, he swore
to the Kansas City *Star*

not long before he died
it's all clean, the new era, I'm a

wild progressive now, the cigar
spittoons and dungheap days

are over

the camel on the back
can *only* come home

through the eye of the needle

O Maxie
what did you *do*

to be so sad?

*

-- 28 Oct-2 Nov 70

Diane Wakoski:

TO AN AUTOCRAT

Today you told me
you kicked the first lady
you lived with
out
because she washed her underwear,
blue silky things,
and hung them in the bathroom to dry.

A few days ago
you told me
another girl got kicked out
for mentioning
grandchildren.

These anecdotes
about taboos
begin to extend from telephone calls
to toothbrushing
and leave me trembling
as I suppose you think a lady should
afraid to make any independent move.
There is no doubt
you possess this house
and everything in it.
You can move me out or in
at will;
have done so to prove your power.
My only weapon
is logic
which salts you like a withering garden snail.
because
it is you
who give me lectures
about the hang-ups of marriage,
and of people wanting to possess each other.

Save your stories for men,
I ought to tell you,
because any woman who buys them

is a guerilla fighter who believes you've been master
of your house too long.
When you move all us silly ones
with our dripping underwear out
and install this one liberated lady with her fine panties
and spider-web bras,
her short icy slips,
and satin garters that draw your eyes up her legs
like filings following a magnet,
and you never see a vestige of how she launders them,
and she follows all your rules
and makes no demands,
while we poor offenders are always needing things
and trying to live our own lives too,
then,
man,
I tremble for you
for real.
Will she cut your throat one night as you sleep
or take off your balls?
Will she steal you blind
and leave with your stock broker
or debilitate you with your own weaknesses
and jump in to mastery after
she's spoiled you for anything but drink and talk?
She is your fate,
anyway,
if you don't realize
that living together
is what makes us human and decent.
We give in to others needs, their rights,
making a fair division of privileges
and chores.

Our dog finds a long beam of sunshine
coming in an afternoon window
and she stretches her doberman body
to fit it.
          She follows the sunshine around the house
from morning to late afternoon,
stretching or curling into the patterns it makes
on the floor.
She is not perfect,
but she fits
the hours of the day.
                              She understands
living/
        loving what you have,

making
the fit.

Brief Notes:

§ Robert Creeley's poem in this issue first appeared as a free poem from The Alternative Press, 4339 Avery, Detroit, Michigan § The list of women's names is from the October 1939 issue of Verve. Gladys Spencer, my mother, who died November 30, 1970, was added to free her from the unreleased circumstances of her life § Allen Ginsberg's notes on Blake first appeared inside the album "Allen Ginsberg / William Blake" (see ad, page 159) § Sentence on back cover: Robert Kelly § Painting reproduced on page 6, from Rock Art of the American Indian, by Campbell Grant, NY, 1967. The original c. 4 ft. tall §

Allen Ginsberg: BLAKE NOTES

To Young or Old Listeners

The songs were first composed on tape recorder, improvised on pump organ in farmhouse upstate N. Y. in two nights after returning from Democratic Convention 1968 Tear Gas Chicago. These are half the Songs of Innocence & Experience now finished to music; the rest will be completely tuned in another year.

Inspiration began 21 years, half my life ago, living in Harlem, in mind's outer ear I heard Blake's voice pronounce The Sun Flower and The Sick Rose (and the Little Girl Lost) and experienced an illumination of eternal Consciousness, my own heart identical with the ancient heart of the Universe.

It's taken 2 decades of vision fame, friends' deaths & Apocalyptic history for me to materialize the spiritual illumination received thru these poems, without systematic study of Blake's life & only fragmentary study of later works. I imagined this music after 20 summers musings over the rhythms.

William Blake (1757-1827), engraved his own picture plates, hand colored, & printed Songs of Innocence & Experience (1789-1794), only a couple dozen copies. Thus every word, every picture & every print of the book he made in his life bore the impress of his own intelligent body; there was no robot mechanical repetition in any copy. The title Songs of Innocence & Experience is literal: Blake used to sing them unaccompanied at his friends' houses.

The purpose in putting them to music was to articulate the significance of each holy & magic syllable of his poems; as if each syllable had intention. These are perfect verses, with no noise lost or extra accents for nothing. I tried to hear meanings of each line spoken intentionally & interestedly, & follow natural voice tones up or down according to different emphases and emotions vocalized as in daily intimate speech: I drew the latent tunes, up or down, out of talk-tones suggested by each syllable spoken with normal feeling.

Piping
Down the
ey
Vall
Wi
ld:

Thus the flute pipes notes down from the hill into the deep valley floor with accurate melody.

Since a physiologic ecstatic experience had been catalysed in my body by the physical arrangement of words in so small a poem as Ah! Sun Flower, I determined long ago to think of poetry as a kind of machine that had a specific effect when planted inside a human body, an arrangement of picture effect associations that vibrated on the mind bank network; and an arrangement of related sounds & physical mouth movements that altered the habit functions of the neural network. XX century French poet Artaud noted that certain sound vibrations, certain rhythmic frequencies of music or voice, might alter molecular patterns in the nervous system.

I had been led to hear by ear individual syllables and their spoken tonal intention by a whole American poetic tradition begun at turn of century with Pound who specified that for any prosody (measure of poetry rhythm) adequate to our real speech, the poet should train his ear "pay attention to the tone leading of vowels" instead of the tripping of stressed accents -- i.e., hear the musical Aum vowel alternations of note & rhythm pattern, and not get hung up on voiced monotone stressed da dit da dit da dit da dits -- like, "Thou too sail on O Ship of State." W.C. Williams, Pound's friend, taught attention to raw spoken talk to learn the "for real" rhythms of American poetry. Later Basil Bunting sharpened my attention to vowels as solid objects in a verse line.

Ma Rainey, Pound, Dylan, Beatles, Ray Charles, Ed Sanders & other singers have returned language poesy to Minstrelsy. As new generations understand & decipher poetical verses for gnostic-psychedelic flashes & practical Artistic messages, I hope that musical articulation of Blake's poetry will be heard by the Pop Rock Music Mass Media Electronic Illumination Democratic Ear and provide an Eternal Poesy standard by which to measure sublimity & sincerity in contemporary masters such as Bob Dylan, encouraging all souls to trust their own genius Inspiration.

For the soul of the Planet is Wakening, the time of Dissolution of Material Forms is here, our generation's trapped in Imperial Satanic Cities & Nations, & only the prophetic priestly consciousness of the Bard -- Blake, Whitman or our own new selves -- can Steady our gaze into the Fiery eyes of the Tygers of the Wrath to Come.

SONGS OF INNOCENCE

INTRODUCTION: Passing thru the Natural World, piping unconscious music, Poet glimpses Eternal Vision, child spirit on a cloud, his own Imagination, that demands he play intuitive feeling music to God, who weeps to hear Man-Poet's answer come true. Mind-Child weeps to find it's possible to show God through language. Vision vanishes leaving instructions for Poet to lay inspiration out in words to entrance later generations. ("Sentient Beings are Numberless, I vow to save them all" is the first of 4 Buddhist vows.) Poet takes simple materials near his body, hollow reed, & messes up the clear water to make ink & writes it down forever.

THE SHEPHERD: The first song "Every child may joy to hear" utters how sweet it is to do nothing but sit in natural pasture following the flock of mind thoughts that pass thru his brain same as lamb and ewe calling each other knowing a supreme Consciousness aware of everyone is in Everyone.

THE ECCHOING GREEN: But all natural sunrise bells are an apparition on green symmetrical pastures of matter grass & hills in an illusionary echo world. The old folks bodies get tired & wither under older trees & they sit watching Baby games thru eyes that also saw themselves dance play & copulate & friends vanish in graves. Sun descends, we even get tired of joy & want to sleep, a shadow passes over the illusion of Garden & City, consciousness dims & we forget the green ecchoing Field forever as it fades.

THE LAMB: Who are we here? What tender being gave us ourselves? Lamb's wool or soft sexual human skin, voices calling & murmuring our desires to each other till the whole world lights up with our feeling, Who is our Love? Our selves are the same as the Lamb or Christ or Lords, that desired to become living meat spirit, to Cry & die, living in the strange material world an eternal minute. The Piper-Poet-Lamb-Child shepherd soul knows & tells fellows who forgot to bless themselves.

THE LITTLE BLACK BOY: Suffering! Race experience burning into the skin & blackening it with the sun-fires of life. White Light Eternal Being, the Abyss of Light, the Void is identical to our own souls: the English child looks "white as an Angel" which he is (or will be when he realizes his soul). "And I am black, but O! my soul is white" is a racist masochistic tearful sentiment from the 18th century Slave Days to modern political eyes: Gnostic (secret knowledge of the Abyss of Light) Vision transforms the understanding, we realize the Bodhisattva's singing to the inexperienced Honkey Material Soul, saying that all matter-body is a cloud of Ignorance. "And we are put on earth a little space that we may bear the beams of love." And when the cloud-bodies vanish we return to our identical Primeval Radiance. Matter itself is a shield against this brightness too vast for human body. ("Life, like a dome of many-colored Glass stains the white radiance of Eternity until death tramples it to fragments..." wrote Shelley who like Blake read Gnostic texts in translation by Thomas Taylor the Platonist. Taylor also translated Pythagoras' line "Whatever we see when awake, is Death; and when asleep, a Dream.") The black boy or Jewish boy trembling rejected by the English Child, his homosexual love rejected by the master race, realizes the English Child's white because his body hasn't yet been blasted by the deep heat of God's love, white is inexperience; & the only place the little Black boy will be fully understood is when their material bodies fall away transparent & they are reunited in the Place of Death.

THE BLOSSOM: Sparrow into Blossom: Yang & Yin, Phallus & Vagina, Tantric Lingam & Yoni, Form and Emptiness, Matter & Void, Samsara & Nirvana, Maya and Sunyatta, Aeon & Abyss of Light, Life into Death, are incarnated in the emotional softness of the robin sobbing under green leaves in flower's bosom. Straight sex comes identical with metaphysical Mystery in a little almost unnoticeable ditty in Blake's book.

THE CHIMNEY SWEEPER: "You know the words by heart, huh?" Peter Orlovsky's voice asks. And the sorrowful horror of child slavery begins tale weeping -- 18th century London XX century New York, the same skulls sitting at tables reading papers headlining massacre slavery. The material universe so debased, city greed and poverty so unbearable the imagination only breaks out thru the skull in Death -- and then comes vision of the Heaven Desire we can imagine once we do accept our soul feelings as more real than the material fix we have been trapped in. Blake was a friend of Tom Paine the Revolutionary & tipped Paine off that the fuzz had a warrant for his arrest in London 1792 -- Paine skipped the country from Dover across the English Channel to France a couple of hours before the Police arrived. The Chimney Sweeping, infant slavery to society, is also interpreted here as faithful Bodhisattvic work of social revolution -- "So if all do their duty they need not fear harm." The vision of angels with bright keys and myriad elevated voice notes of shiny children washing in tearful rivers reminds us of Reality we all desired forever, and always will, and will achieve forever in life or Death, no matter what a cold dark Capitalist/police-state Satanic morning we are born into with bodies.

THE LITTLE BOY LOST: Authority, the State, the Mortal Father, all vanish as our Consciousness outgrows Habit & Conditioning (thru Time, Acid, Sex or Vision) & the soul is left alone: to weep, and thus thru intuitive Feeling, Disperse "the Vapors" of Mortal Boring Gloom.

THE LITTLE BOY FOUND: So the soul boy follows wandering imagination, the mind's heart crying tears, & the great Authority (Great as shroudy Death) appears & leads him to Mother Nature Life. She also thought he was lost, they only found each other thru his emotional tears, & she'd wept for him all along too.

LAUGHING SONG: Water & trees are alive, the great grassy hill rocks with laughter, spring spreads green smile in meadows; all illusion material universe giggles in the void, girls young tongues show noises. Birds are only painted sentient, laughing theosophically to themselves in the valley of the shadow. No harm in Maya Dream Life, merry Nuts! Blake's colored picture shows a table at the wood's edge with fruits, nuts, girls & a young man in red skin-tight suit lifting cup dancing laughing facing the trees. The rhythmic Paradigm of the laughing song is echoed verse by verse with Ha Ha He's in second chorus making mirror image of universe in pure laughter receding into infinity.

HOLY THURSDAY: Multitudes of sentient children in London 18th century like tender insects waving their hands and singing in the Domed Mortal Universe of St. Paul's Cathedral are the only angels visible in this Eternity. Even the old archons tending them are exquisite. Blake's not being sardonic, he's seeing the central holiness of multitudinous being: "Everyone's an angel": then cherish pity lest you drive an angel from your door. The verses can only be read naturally if they syncopate Thames Waters & Wise Guardians -- spaced out Orlovsky singing against Don Cherry on Flute and trumpet Zapped the tune up to ecstatic joy instead of a tender lamblike chorus it might also supposed to be.

NIGHT: Most mellow address to Night, sleep, Death & Heavenly Peace. Little visions of lovely earth in the mind's eye vanishing, farewell to the physical fields & woods. And when the break with life comes, Death's Terror's transformed to Eternal peacefulness: "And there the lion's ruddy eyes/Shall slow with tears of gold." Realizing that the Lion Ego abandons his selfhood & lies down with the Lamb to die -- all pain Fear and Unsatisfied Desire radiating out of head Consciousness washed away thru experience of the Body & Dissolution of the body -- pure feeling consciousness is left eternal shining thru all living Being, "Golden Emptiness" said dead Kerouac same as "Abyss of Light."

SONGS OF EXPERIENCE

INTRODUCTION: Prophecies, Futurecies! Great claim of the Bard, to call directly to the Soul hidden in the world, obscured & forgot weeping sunk in material thickness, old Gnostic tune. Ecological intuition, the Holy Word walked among the Ancient Trees. Meanwhile man Prisoned in the starry Universe tries to destroy this planet-prison with Electrical Machines and pollutes the wat'ry floor with DDT Detergents. Blake calls thru civilization to Earth Man to return to knowledge of his own soul & live in place with the Material Universe as his to control only till Death's daybreake.

NURSE'S SONG: The deepest voice of Experience tells the tale of vanishing bodies and Time -- our Guardian says innocent play ignores sexual glory till too late -- the Nurse's face turns green & pale remembering the body love & eye soul she refused to realize as a child; and now old in winter & night she is afraid to show her still childlike Desire's naked glory because her body ages near death & it becomes repulsive to her.

THE SICK ROSE: English Poetry is pure Mantra here as penetrant & capable of causing Transcendental Knowledge as any Hindu Hare Krishna or Hari Om Namo Shivaye. What's the Rose? Genital Flowers? Body Life? God? What's the Worm? Cancer Syphilis? Mind Time? Death? Or If the Rose is all Life itself what dark Secret Love eats at our Being? Does the Universe Die? Is God Death?

AH! SUN FLOWER: The Sun Flower, our own Soul Desire, tho root-trapped in earth turns to the source of Desire, the Sun of Death, "where the travellers journey is done." Youth's and Virgin's desire are unsatisfied unsatisfiable mortal forms only not Immortal Union in the Golden Clime where the Sun goes at Night. The Sun flower, rooted in earth, alive, can only turn longingly to follow the sun's path beyond life itself.

THE GARDEN OF LOVE: Consciousness builds a Church of Fear in the body's Garden. Flowers of desire die, & lovers' graves appear in time; but Mind priests take Mad advantage by punishing & forbidding desire altogether while we're here in the garden.

LONDON: The first modern Prophetic poem de-hypnotizing the city & exorcising the Money phantoms that "charter" or "own" space -- time Garden plots, cover rivers & riversides of Thames (or Hudson) with Robot Mental smog Money Real Estate Usury Exploitation Law Possession Greed Cancer Stone-Metal Pollution & Spiritual & Physical Death Banks. Walk out in 17th century London or XX century Wall Street look directly in Man's eyes see Marks of weakness marks of woe -- the direct imprint of anxiety visible on face masks of Folk caught in City Mental prisons which are concepts of Money gain & exploitation of other beings and nature. Slaves of Machinery! Matter Junkies with oil Burner Habits! Manhattos' Zombies, "In meine Heimat/ Where the dead walked/and the living were made of cardboard." Brainwashed by Moloch & the CIA & the Mafia & Chase Bank, So they have destroyed Mother Nature a hundred miles around. And the hapless soldier's sigh runs in Blood down White House Walls. Boys sobbing in armies Berkeley to Vietnam! All Love turned financial commercial makes the Honeymoon car a Hearse of Desire. A death Lament for the Machine Nations filled with Satanic Mills.

THE HUMAN ABSTRACT: The Gods made Nature free but Ego greeds grow weird false Universe trees in the human physical Brain. Hear it vibrating in your own & realize the dead mechanical universe is a mind trap Illusion created by your senses . . . "To the Eyes of a Man of Imagination, Nature is Imagination itself" -- Blake in letter to Rev. Trusler.

TO TIRZAH: Blake stuck this poem in Songs of Experience ten years after the other poems were arranged -- late wisdom, Gnostic-Kabalistic-Buddhist transcendental put-down of the entire phenomenal sensory universe as a mental Illusion mothered by Ruha, Tirzah, Sophia, Momma Nature Creatrix Consciousness herself a shadow reflection of the Abyss of Light shuddering a second flashing on itself. In Beginning the Word (Sophia Mother Wisdom Knowledge Tirzah) flash-imagined all Aeons down to Jehova's Garden. The Serpent was the Caller of The Great Call, disguised messenger from the Abyss of Light, according to the Mandean Gnostic* heresy suppressed around 313 AD Rome when Constantine Emperor (CIA) accepted Christ took over Religion & suppressed revolutionary metaphysical hip gnostic Illumination of the fake Authority of the Material Universe itself. The Roman State coopted religion at Council of Nicea & burned all Dissenting metaphysical doctrines. This established the Satanic State, presidently headed by Richard Nixon, Jehovah in disguise forgetting to whom he is beholden, son of Elohim, Descendant of Ialdaboath, only a flash of Sophia's Consciousness, herself a flash of self-consciousness in the Infinite Abysse of Light. The Shekinah was too great for the 7 cups the 7 Sephiroth, the seven Chakra centers of the human body, which shattered. Now the Rabbis are occupied giving the light back to God. We will return to the Abyss of Light. "It is raised a spiritual body."

THE GREY MONK: (This poem is separate, later than Songs of Innocence & Experience). On the Revolution, French then, American now, these fragments of Blake's thought returned to my mind in melodious form on a bus up

Bayshore Freeway Los Gatos to San Francisco August 10, 1968 or thereabouts riding back from visit to wooden urned ashes of the body of Neal Cassidy old love friend & heroic American mind angel died in mid-life. " They never can work war's overthrow." He'd been imprisoned by the State 1959-61 several years for giving a free grass cigarette to the secret police, ruined off his railroad vocation and plunged into homeless psychedelic exploration thereafter till death. " Fayette Fayette thou'rt bought & sold is thy happy morrow, " & other Blake verses remembered after touching Cassidy's ashes were the first music that occurred to me tuned to Blake's rhymes. " This hand, " wrote in Howl, " Moloch whose fate is a cloud of Sexless Hydrogen." My brother is Leroi Jones; Thy father's sword was drawn in North Vietnam; the Panthers have armed themselves in steel to avenge the wrongs thy children Feel: But Vain the sword & vain the Bow, They never can work war's overthrow. Violent Vengeance perpetuates self-righteous Tyranny, and A sigh is the Sword of An Angel King.

* See The Gnostic Religions, by Dr. Hans Jonas, Beacon Paperback.

Dec 14 - 15, 1969
New York City - returned
again from Chicago as
Defense Witness,
Conspiracy Trial.

Robert Creeley:

FOR BETSY AND TOM

We are again
walking in a
straight line---feet

fall, footsteps. We
walk! I am
happy, foolish I

stumble on to the next
person, I think
to myself, charming in

the peace she so manifestly
carries with her. All the
children follow us. The

dogs walk also,
with a sort of sedateness.
They think

they think. We
whistle. I want to
love everyone alive!

Rochelle Nameroff:

KINESIS, CONTAGION

religious
the practice of beating   beating
the poem as a measure of
discipline   broken mis-
carriage of disciples from the heart
beats an element of the flagellant
of method sophisticate
named unmouth
satiation

man
whipped
for the new moon time
in Brazil
torn
on the genitals

man
to be a man unmanned
stray sexual dance this
mortification   that is
death & disgust of
flesh

but done with a flourish in Europe
a self-scourging
Brotherhood   an
institution

the members hooded
hidden in cowls   black
the Masters with purple velvet
banners & cloth of gold
not really
sombre they knew
what they were about

The Brother-
hood held an open air
service to clear the air

of the plague
& the other monks
for they were not of the Church

The Brotherhood
formed the circle the
magic round of regeneration
& stripped
off clothes to the waist
piled them in-
side the circle & the sick
of the village stepped
in

chanted!
the beaters
marched around the circle
threw themselves groundward on signal
& were whipped
glorious

the Master in his hand a heavy
scourge with three or
four leather thongs
each tipped
with needle sharp metal studs
especially whipping the breasts
& the backs
rhythmically
beating
in the circle to frenzy
& faster the chanting

garish plague flower

the liquid from buboes formed
a decadent aster
or zinnia
hard whip petaled
for absolution
the taste of the metal
left new centres of
infection
spreading
curse flowing
following the dance

Robert Kelly:

THE HAT

Now my eye keeps getting caught
by the pink silk made in Japan
yamalka (dont worry, nobody
knows how to spell it) given to me
at my request as a souvenir
of Dr G' s wedding in New Jersey
I did not attend, February
not being my month for skids
& byzantine adventures, though I leaned
the not inconsiderable weight of my
attention lovingly on his marriage
before & also after, his lady the dark
beautiful lady from Transylvania
by name a flower (in Hungarian).

I can inform myself by peering
inside the hat: WEDDING RECEPTION/
GRAENUM AND VIORICA / FEBRUARY
7, 1970, which is the sum
of english-language documentation
of these two good friends now
to our sorrow removed to Carolina
where my addiction comes from,
inland, particularly american,
used to be the bestseller, nice
to be on top for a change, but likely
fallen now to some filtered upstart
more plausible but not less dangerous,
a conman Marlboro beside the good old
shoot-em-up desperado, el mio Camel
I have been coughing suspiciously from
lately, suspecting a Change in the Blend
or am I finally giving out in those places
fond of such irritation to provoke
them to meaningful speech? A question.
Or is it cancer. I could dissociate
myself from these matters, as inquiries,
were the day cooler, less like the hot
air inside a hat, like the smelly warm

inside of a morgue, they are not
airconditioned, faithful watcher
of surgical tv, the ripe stiffs
are not on ice or sealed
in polyethylene, & my awareness of this
by modern rootless logic
reinforces my fear
that I & those I love are in a state
of jeopardy to their private condition
ensuing on undeclared war & the ingestion
of murderous gases & solids, partly
beyond their control (environment)
& part by their own glib
cooperation, despairful beyond caring
what's good for you, as if we meant to pay
with our loveliness for all the death
our economy, it is ours, blazes
up & down the earth as by-product
of its arcane self-discipline, money,
a gyroscope looks queer beside it, money,
money, like the comma in a meaningless
sentence, hung up on death, a hobby?,
killing, is it of the essence? we are not
encouraged to find out, treatises
of the Harvard elect are conspicuous
by silence on this matter, remote, chacun
à sont goût, we must suppose
it to be a matter of taste that some
like to kill, that gross national product
be propped in our mysterious oz
on hostile carriage & foreign war,
simply, most of our money is to kill.

Now it is just here
that the yamalka would help me out.
It is the color
of your sister's panties, her first
brassiere, a splash
on de Kooning's floor 12 years ago,
a sunset over Lyonesse. It says
(if only a jewish hat could talk)
I've lost the point again, I can learn
precisely nothing from this hat
(though an archeologist could reconstruct
the Newark horizon & the national debt),
my friends are gone
down into white Winston-Salem
& I observe the rock-hard summer

greasy with heat, me & it, try not to be
mean to anybody (my share of peace)
trying to believe my flags & so on
when what I go on believing
is my eagerness for people, things
can get dreary, I hear the train
most nights slipping past
over the burgeoning water caltrop,
those Hudson lotuses of congested
sexuality yes that's what it is these
woods, these rapist groves
attuned to all immoderate hungers
darkened for the pursuit
of (old theme) those who hurt themselves.
Lotuses, messengers up the spine. Here,
right now, another voice
needs to walk in, or a strophe
out of Aeschylus appear, to persuade
me I'm on the right ritual, hate like piss
to be dragging the wrong goat
to the wrong altar anyhow, you
know what I mean?

so summer
fills its pockets with my wits,
ah but I'm not as hungry as I say,
you figgered it out, this greed
is a stance, & like a dance, religion:
Song: I want it all
but something tells me
I'm not going to get it
so I abide
with a perpetual hunger
which itself I am permitted
to contemplate
instead of satiety,
which makes it all right in the rain.
A statue. The lordly rider
whose bronze behind keeps the horse steady,
headed into the rain. Desire. Looks
enough like a man to fool a pigeon,
bombs away. The war
spills over into every gesture,
Colleoni, Bigballs, trampling
the economic dead, Rembrandt's
heavy hand on the burin, gouging
the dark in, let the light
take care of itself,

our business
is with airports, innocent travelers
bop down from the Chicago plane,
kind & smiling, no knives here,
the desperado comes home, some sun
left over from above the clouds
beams on their welcomed faces.
Friends coming from the west,
they enter, bestowing.
The noisiest silence in three continents
breaks open in the shape of an ear.

Clayton Eshleman:

THE GOLDEN STRING

Above all the kitchen bathtub with little white lion feet
where you bathe in the lovely shore light off Hydra

Above all the golden string

Adrienne
Ariadne
soaping your arms & wishing me well in the bright gladiator light at the poem's
[limits
which is but a leaf on which the baby Krishna burbles & curls full of play
This Self which is flooded at the touch of your hand to the ignition

Above all
Adrienne
Ariadne
Above all Barbara who suffered it

for there is always a third who is there in the raw breakthru of being
A third who stands at cross-purposes with our heart
wishing the antagonists well, the Holy Host

It is she who is pregnant with their desires
She clasps their book to her heart & waits in the dense Okumura garden
& Paradise is to admit her, she stands
before the lovers with an infant in her arms

This is the way of the earth, that the garden is always slightly off center
That the stallions of total translation are never loosed
Thus not an answer but a golden string is given

Above all this golden string

leads me to your bathtub in the garden where you are soaping & laughing
& your slippery happiness is deep
& great enough for me to enter fully & be bathed
in the cool
reality of the mirage

Come on in, Barbara!
Don't you know this golden string allows you & Matthew to laugh

& splash with us, that this garden is incomplete without both of you
entering the bubbles & rubies of all our desires
The pregnant red spider,

the flies, the cicadas in *The House of Okumura*
can here follow Adrienne's golden string & laugh & dance with us
in the great dimension of
this string

And this is the construction of this string,
it is interwoven with indignation & hesitancy, with dark
reservation & guilt
For in vision these withholdings are the pressed
bodies of the creatures with whom we dance,
the terrible sun illumes for us the bastings of blood, the pressed

lives of the creatures, the tiny grey spider abandoned
as the cold sets in is here, the pumpkin-colored slug on
the stone December ledge, all the terrified captives

cut down by the gladiators in the light at the poem's limit

And thus the energy of my dream reverberates down the golden coils
of the imagination, this paradise which is not mine alone fans
& deepens with the churring of the orange monarch's wings

I behold the great blue & crimson caterpillars mingling with the bodies
of those I love, & my own blood roars the messenger is your double name.

1 October 1970
Sherman Oaks

Carl Thayler:

A CHICAGO POEM HAVING LITTLE TO DO WITH THE CHIPPEWA

What if, after the petitions of rivers,
Of Death and of Rhode Island
They were still to insinuate their trust
O less each year? Persistantly,
To place at their backs always
The lavish ramifications of summer
And to live forever
In Chicago. Alone.
A surplus of toes in their socks,
Those sediments the winds cut through.

What if, to recommend Paradise
All songs were teenage songs,
Each morning so like the last
And inconspicuous. The gleam of the river at Green Forks
So like the last, endlessly.
To come dutifully to this
Great dark vista of cries, eyes of insects
The only green I've seen this spring
At the tail end of tornado alley.

I say dutifully
Having little patience with pain
Left so casually in the flesh. And wander
Sunset to the Purple Onion,
Which is not Paradise. The toilets
Here are coin operated. To be stopped at.
In their pants where the poor piss,
In their socks where the toes grow numerous.

STAN BRAKHAGE'S CORRESPONDENCE WITH THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

The Museum of Modern Art
11 W 53rd Street
NY, NY 10019
August 6, 1970

Dear Stan:

The heat of summer is terrible here. I have just returned from a miserable winter in Europe. We were told that was the worst season for snow and rain in a hundred years. I suspect that this summer qualifies for being just as unendurable.

Jonas, Adrienne, Willard and I were discussing some ideas concerning future programming here at the Museum. We felt that with the establishment of the much-awaited, much-needed Anthology Cinema and the projected screenings of independent films (on a regular basis) at the Whitney, that the Department of Film should revise its perspective on independent film-makers. How could we call attention to the independent film-maker in a manner that would not duplicate the efforts of these other organizations?

We have not come up with any satisfactory answer, but there was a suggestion, about which we all were keen. The Department of Film should begin mounting retrospectives of independent film-makers, and make this cycle a part of its regular programming.

To this end we would be honored if you would consent to be our first independent film-maker to whom we can devote several weeks of programming? After all you certainly are regarded as the most influencial independent film artist in America today, and you certainly have an astonishing body of work which is continually developing.

If you are agreeable to mounting a cycle of your works, we can discuss setting aside some weeks before late spring, and how we would handle the program. Will it be complete? How about 8mm films? Program notes? Poster? How about selling copies of your Film Culture issue at our bookstore? Naturally we would pay your way to New York for the opening of the tribute.

It is about time we started to display more extensively the work of independent film-makers. You would be the first. Are you interested? We certainly are.

Hello to your family and animal friends, with best wishes, peace and health,

Sincerely,

Larry Kardish.

Stan Brakhage
Box #6
Rollinsville, Colorado 80474
August 10, 1970

Dear Larry,

I am very honored you have chosen my work for opening your series of film-maker retrospectives -- and very happy there is to BE such a series...

You can expect full cooperation from me apropo Program Notes, etc. -- tho, in fact, I think it would be best if you drew on your own files, old Film Cultures and other publications, etc., for whatever information on each film you may want (in addition, if you feel that's neccessary, to the Film Co-op Catalogue notes) and, as a matter of fact, if you drew on your own, some newer, sensibilities apropo selection of statements on my work and/or specific statements on each film: if this gets to be too much work, you can always simply use the catalogue 'blurbs' as they are: they are the best I've been able to give to the matter of description etc. I can send you a 'good' photograph of 'clean shaven' self: (the 'ragged claw' Brakhage, bearding Antonioni in Grove's catalogue is a little antique): as to stills, Grove has the whole collection of all negatives and instructions to let anyone look at 'em, choose what they want, and receive an 8 x 10 glossie for the print cost. It would be nice if you could find someone 'respectable', like they say, to do a special written introduction to the affair -- or maybe you'd need several: Parker Tyler was good for the early work: P. Adams Sitney for the mid period: who-the-hell might be best critic for my later works? . . . God only knows! -- it's getting lonely, these days: (I've had some beautiful statements from Guy Davenport on "Songs" and some fine 'searchings' from Fred Camper of M. I. T.; but these don't constitute Critiques -- tho' Davenport is probably capable of 'em, given a chance to see all the films ... Camper may be capable once fully grown up: what's REALLY needed is a whole fresh look: isn't there ONE known respectable Critic who can take on the WHOLE of an Artist's output and give it an honest whirl?: I'm afraid not: tho' you may find just the man, somewhere: it'd be fun to give someone-who-gave-movies-UP a chance, like Rudolph Arnheim -- but there's not world-enough-and-time, etc... the-man-on-the-street? -- ah, well, shit!

We'll have to make the same 'deal' with you we did with Cote' when the Canadian Cinemateque wanted, and then ran, a retrospective several years back -- that is, you'll have to buy "Songs": we just don't have any way to rent them, no copies for that purpose: but that shouldn't cause you any problem as you do now, I understand, have an 8mm film library: the total length of "Songs" is somewhere between 6 and 7 hours, run at between 16-18 f.p.s: the cost is $1200, for all: they look their most beautiful on the big screen IF the projector's light is sufficient to carry the image fully: thus they can run right along with everything else... so that's no problem --

As to order-of-film, chronologic is, by far, the best: you just take 'em in the order made and break up your programs to fit your own needs thatwise. And I'll be happy to come and sing and dance at the opening.

Blessings, Stan Brakhage

The Museum of Modern Art
11 W 53rd Street
NY, NY 10019
August 12, 1970

Stan:

Got your letter.
Beautiful, just beautiful.
Let us get back to you in
a couple of weeks.

Peace,
Larry

ps
-- chronological order - yes
-- specific comments on each film - yes
-- introduction printed - yes
-- Film Culture sale - yes
-- Brakhage in NY - yes
-- "The Songs" - have to ask Willard. He's on vacation.
But keep insisting.

The Museum of Modern Art
11 W 53rd Street
NY, NY 10019
August 22, 1970

Dear Stan:

Will you be coming in for the opening of the Anthology Cinema in October? Perhaps you and I and Adrienne and Willard and Jonas and P. Adams can get together and sit and chat about the retrospective that we are planning to do for you here.

I must confess sadly that SONGS will be a problem. We understand that if we are to do a retrospective there must be some way we can show them and in order to show them we must purchase prints (understandably). However, we have shitty facilities for screening 8mm and we just got our acquisition budget for the year July-July of only $2500! Hardly enough to wipe our noses with. (The Trustees took a beating on the stock market we are told.) Eileen Bowser has already promised this money to dupe prints of films we owe to various archives. However, Williard says he probably could raise some money, but not $1200 for one acquisition. I know this is lousy. The only immediate solution I can think to this problem is that we may be able to do a joint retrospective with the Anthology Cinema -- Anthology doing the 8mm films (they have the facilities) and we doing the 16mm. It is understood that we would help to underwrite the purchase cost of the films. I don't know how this sounds, I am just throwing it out for consideration and let's talk about it.

Anyhow I have been thinking of your films often. Judy is about to have a baby, and I will be in the delivery room (P. Adams says the experience is overwhelming), and now I am trying to talk the hospital into letting me in with a camera. Its a Catholic hospital so I'm sure there will be a crucifix. I wonder how they will feel about the new religious object -- a Bolex.

Keep well and with peace and health,

Sincerely,

Larry Kardish

Stan Brakhage
Box #6
Rollinsville, Colorado 80474
August 25, 1970

Mr. Willard Van Dyke
Film Dept. The Museum of Modern Art
11 W 53rd Street, NY NY

Dear Willard,

The answer, apropo the proposed Stan Brakhage Retrospective at The Museum of Modern Art, is: no!

I am writing this to you, rather than Larry Kardish, with whom I' ve been corresponding, because you are the only person -- at The Museum -- responsible for this decision on-my-part: you are the person ... who is forced, I know ... to refuse the very generous terms I offered: you are the one who had to say that The Museum simply could not afford to buy "Songs", let alone pay film rentals for that Retrospective.

And, in a way, I' m glad that you couldn' t afford "Songs": that was ' the last straw' for me and has forced me to arrive at the following decision: I will, from now on, refuse ALL requests for rental-free films; and I fully realize that this means my films will NOT be shown at ANY of the museums in this country -- ALL of whom refuse this simple payment ...: (I had already, last year, turned-down offers from six large institutes, on these grounds: I was trying to make this special dispensation with regard to The Museum of Modern Art because of my liking for you personally, my realization that you were trying to do the best for the art of the film, of any museum director in the country, and because you have been particularly helpful to Jonas Mekas in every way possible: but there is a larger concern involved, which my leniency with regard to The Museum of Modern Art was weakening: all these institutes manage to raise the money to pay their janitors, etcetera, but refuse to pay the artists who are, in fact, the whole source of their being.)

Generally speaking, the artists in America are in a worse position financially than, say, migrant workers: while it is true that artists, generally, manage a much better living than migrant workers, it is ALSO true that they are NOT permitted to do so AS ARTISTS: most of their money comes, in fact, from activities which WEAKEN their ability to create: The Museum s, including The Museum of Modern Art, not only perpetuate this situation but benefit from it -- this suppression of creativity -- enormously.

Most people are astonished when I show them the correspondence I' ve had, these last several weeks, with Larry Kardish: they find it almost impossible to believe that The Museum of Modern Art would ask me for a Retrospective of my films without intending to pay rentals on them -- and that The Museum offers me only a round-trip ticket to New York as 'payment' for this occasion...: in fairness to yourself, I then show them the letters from Cinematheques all over the world, Whitney Museum, Univ. of Calif. Film Archives, Maeght Foundation, Universities and colleges all over this country, etcetera: I shall begin, from now on, showing these correspondences wherever I go, reading them in public, working passages from them into every lecture I give, every article I write: for they seem to constitute, to me, the 'heart of the matter' involving poverty of The Artist in The United States, at least. I shall have to single-out The Museum of Modern Art, in this respect, particularly, because that institute's Film Department has, for the longest time, pretended to represent 'The Art of The Film' -- and has, actually, only been an extension of the public reltions departments of Hollywood studios ... has refused, consistently for 18 years of my experience, to demand as much of film as they do of painting -- AND to refuse to pay film artists when they are fortunate enough to stumble across one. Most serious film students clearly regard the film showings at The Museum of Modern Art as scandalous as would be the case IF the paintings exhibited in the rest of The Museum were for the most part Hallmark Greeting Cards, etc.: I think you, Willard, realize this -- at least, I trust that you do .. : but the fact remains, unfortunately, that you have been UNable to change this situation ... your position, thus, is untenable -- I can no longer honor it -- have no more patience to extend in your directions.

I am sorry: I have the feeling you have done your very best.

The Museum of Modern Art Film Department apparently belongs to Hollywood: and nothing you, with all your sincerity, have done has been able to significantly change that.

For years, I've been asking myself WHY it is that Revolutions always seem to occur under the MORE benevolent King and/or at the time when living conditions have become much BETTER for The People than they were. This morning I think I came upon the answer: I think The King is more benevolent because he HAS to be, is forced BY the impending Revolution -- NOT because, as many social commentators would have us believe, his benevolence prompts Revolution thru laxity. His benevolence, of course, comes too late and is too little. All of which is to say that I think as fine-a-man as yourself was hired for that position at The Museum of Modern Art Film Department beCAUSE that department had already become corrupt, in its taste for Hollywood trash, beYOND any salvation I am truly sorry: I had, as you know, tried to be of help to that department in every way I could for years!: that was, I think, wasted energy on my part.

This morning I tried to call you long distance (at what is a GREAT expense to me) to ask you what I could do to help you: the phone answering service came on announcing the film program for the day: it was "Happy Broadway", or somesuch 30s musical junk by George Cukor (I was too shocked, frankly, to remember the title correctly): this was the same, to me, as if The Museum 'proper' were announcing a painting exhibit of the candy box covers for George Washington chocolates: I GOT 'the message'.

Stan Brakhage

Box #6
Rollinsville, Colorado 80474
August 26, 1970

Willard Van Dyke
Director, Film Dept.
The Museum of Modern Art
11 W 53rd Street
NY, NY 10019

Dear Willard Van Dyke,

My letter to you, written yesterday, was somewhat personal. I now feel it incumbent to write to you, simply, as The Director of The Film Department of The Museum of Modern Art.

I want the issues stated clearly.

The Museum of Modern Art Film Department should pay the rental fees of whatever films, by independent film-makers, it shows. It should, in other words, assume the same economic responsibility of every university, college, and other, film club in the nation. Its economic hardships, thereby, cannot conceivably be worse than, say, The Experimental Cinema Club of Boulder, Colorado. Its economic hardships are certainly not worse than those of the independent film-makers. (All of which is to say, I do not want to receive any more letters from you, or your staff, describing the economic agonies of The Museum of Modern Art.)

I intend to do everything within my power to effect this simple right.

The Museum of Modern Art Film Dept. can, of course, choose to ignore the independent film-makers. If it does so, however, it will not be permitted to do so with the grace it has managed in the past. The vast majority of the population is now easily able to exhaust its Hollywood interests by watching television. There is an enormous number of young people who have become perfectly aware of the aesthetic limitations 'soap-opera' and, therefore, of what The Museum of Modern Art Film Department largely champions as 'the art of the film'. (All of which is to say, The Museum of Modern Art is already beginning to look ridiculous apropo its attitude toward film.)

I intend to devote my considerable energies, as lecturer and writer, to ridiculing the ridiculous and to specifying The Museum of Modern Art Film Department in detail.

Now, let us not confuse these two issues. The first involves a clear right for payment of goods utilized. I have had no difficulty in eliciting a shocked response from all persons I have informed of the policies of The Museum of Modern Art Film Department apropo refusal to pay for films. I will now begin to inform everyone of this, almost unbelievable, state of affairs.

The second issue, which is one of aesthetics, will give me more trouble: but not, I think, in the long run. On this issue, of the aesthetic poverty of the majority of films you show, I am perhaps more the friend of The Museum than its board of directors: I insist upon the same standards of art, for film, as is accorded to painting: this surely makes me the best friend The Museum has: I defend the dignity of its whole existence: I will not see its purposes corrupted by, say, a nostalgia for old movies. I would rather see The Film Department have an honest death and burial than that it should continue to disgrace the rest of The Museum.

I will not continue to argue this latter issue at this time. I am resolved to insist upon payment to all independent film-makers even if it means that The Museum of Modern Art Film Dept. will discontinue showing their work. It is as a FRIEND of the Museum, as a whole, that I raise this second issue at all. It will be so easy, budget-wise, to decide to discontinue independent film showings, or to only show the works of those who DON'T insist upon payment, that I am afraid this is the decision any board of directors will arrive-at: it is my opinion that such-a-decision would, in effect, deal a death blow to The Film Department. In any event, the issue of film as an art form is too prominent, at this time, to be 'smoothed over': all those seriously involved in that issue have had far too much patience with the childhood of The Museum of Modern Art Film Department: it too must 'grow-up', out of its adulation of movie stars, and face the realities of 20th century United States or else be publicly designated as a museum of quaint antiques and toys.

I sincerely hope that The Museum of Modern Art Film Department will find some way to accept my services as film artist AND aesthetician, rather than regard me as an enemy. You surely understand that it would be the easiest path for me, personally, to accept The Brakhage Retrospective as offered: I am one of the few film-makers who actually would have benefit ed from such an Honor, in the sense that my name is well enough established that such advertisement could only conceivably increase my rentals across the country. I am also among the very few film-makers who might conceivably afford to replace any prints you might damage in such showing, etc. Most film-makers would not increase their rentals by the 'dubious honor' (as it would be regarded by most of the younger generation) of being shown at The Museum of Modern Art: their names would, anyway, be lost in the shuffle of those many films you show there. Many, many film-makers (and some very great ones, too) cannot afford to even make ONE print of their work, let alone expendable prints to supply you for a rent-free show. I, myself, as you surely must know, was forced this last year to dis-continue one of my greatest works, "Scenes From Under Childhood", a work of some five years in the making, for lack of money.

When you ask a film-maker to give his films freely to you (because of the difficulties of arranging your budget) you are doing exactly the same as asking the blind pencil-seller on the corner to give you some money for subway fare because you are too lazy to stand in line and get change for your twenty dollar bill (and, of course, reluctant to give him the twenty IN exchange). You do surely know this. The people as a whole, particularly the young, will surely know this. Let us not argue about it.

Sincerely,

Stan Brakhage

The Museum of Modern Art
11 W 53rd Street
NY, NY 10019
September 22, 1970

Mr. Stan Brakhage
Box #6
Rollinsville, Colorado 80474

Dear Stan:

Thank you for writing to me. It may seem strange but your letter was really welcome in that it articulated some issues that have been on both our minds and that have needed further discussion for some time. I will endeavor to make myself clear on the above matters, and do hope that when you speak about the Museum you will indeed refer to this note.

On the question of rentals our beliefs are as firm as yours. There are compelling reasons for not paying rentals. We do not consider creative endeavors and works of art to be products even though our society frequently exploits their creators. Despite our past and present weaknesses, we still are and hope to remain a cultural and educational institution that is at the service of BOTH the artist and the community. Naturally the artist must be rewarded materially for his work; on the other hand, the artist is not a merchant bargaining his wares. There is an urgent problem here, and in our perspective, flat rentals is not a proper answer.

Also, I do not know how cognizant you are of the complex network of film distribution and exhibition in this city, but as soon as the Museum begins to pay rentals it becomes just another theatre in New York. This is certainly not our aspiration since it negates our primary functions. Both the community and the artist suffer. What was once a gallery in which a wide range of cinematic expression could be experienced becomes a restricted art house.

This is not to say that what we are doing here is sufficient. Of course it is not. We must re-evaluate and re-define our goals and procedures if we are to live up to our obligations. I am deeply concerned about our archive and acquisition policy. Funds are another concern, probably the primary one, for without them there can be no equitable acquisition policy. I am against the purchase of prints at laboratory costs. When a film is a work of art it should be treated as such. The artist must receive some award for his labor. We also think it is very important to find adequate honoraria for filmmakers who come to the Museum to present their work. It is hoped that we can expand our efforts by enlarging our circulation library and thus be of financial help to participating artists.

There is one point, however, where we have different points of view. Our taste and interest in the art of film are more catholic than yours. It is only right that you fight for your particular vision of film, and we appreciate your reaction to the announcement that we were showing a Cukor film (one of his first). Although Cukor's career evolved within the industry, it did not evolve without frustration and without Hollywood modifying some of Cukor's accomplishments. Being an artist, Cukor is by definition independent. Of course, his independence is manifested in a manner different from more contemporary film-makers. Cukor is an excellent artist of film. His works are not trash -- it is as simple as that; I do not need to apologize to anyone for screening his films. Beneath the trivial narrative which may characterize the immediate interest of many of Cukor's films there is the sensibility of a creative filmmaker. His talent becomes evident when witnessing his films in the quiet of our auditorium gallery away from the glamour of Hollywood.

Whatever you may think of us, we are not an agency of the Hollywood public relations offices -- they only wish we were. Of course, we show films produced in Hollywood because some of the finest American films were made there just as some of the finest Japanese, French and German films were conceived and executed through the crassest of commercial considerations. You should also realize that we feel a responsibility to filmmakers from other nations since our work is international and the artists' problems universal.

We invited you to do a retrospective of your films here because it was high time, if not a little late, to present the complete oeuvre of an independent American filmmaker. You were to be the first artist in this continuing program because (a) your films are beautiful and honest, (b) you are an innovator and (c) you are a profound influence in the direction and aesthetic of the international avant-garde.

I will not disagree for a single second that it is noxious that the Museum could not afford to purchase a complete edition of the SONGS. Something had to be done about this wrong and I have done the little I could to rectify this. (Even if you do not care to participate in the retrospective which we would like to compile) we still would like to purchase the SONGS at the price you quoted in your last note. We would screen it during your cycle, and after that only with your permission. Otherwise it would be preserved in our archive and, if you agree, be made available (within the confines of the Film Study Center) to students of film (in the same way prints of films were used to show you when you were selecting for Anthology Cinema). Furthermore if you agree to participate, we can give you a grant of $800 to utilize in any way you wish.

I sincerely hope you will reconsider your position, and do us the honor of presenting a full cycle of your works. I do look forward to hearing from you again on these matters.

Sincerely,

Willard Van Dyke

Box #6
Rollinsville, Colorado 80474
October 7, 1970

Dear Willard,

I' ve been delayed getting back to you because I was 'on the road' East, in Pittsburge giving film program and lecture, where I got happily stuck in a Policecar making a film -- one I' ve long wanted to do but found almost impossible to arrange ... finally managed it, via a Pittsburgh news photographer -- shot 1600 feet in midst of one of the strangest 'dream worlds' ever I attempted to inhabit, to be called "Eyes": the experience created its own perspective, via Charles Olson' s trace of the word "polis": or, to put it simply, I came to understand the Dashiel Hammet figure of " private eye".

I think the first page and a half of your letter of Sept 22nd is on shaky grounds: but let' s not argue about it: time will tell better than any blather between us. I do want to set the record straight on one matter: I appreciate Cukor -- sometimes I think better than, say, Sarris or yourself in your last letter ... I would NOT ask of him more than he' s able: (look!, if perchance you really DO want to see what I mean, pick up ANY pix. of Martha Washington on a chocolate box and ask yourself truly, deeply, WHY that, for all its elegance of line and graceful style, it should NOT be included among the world' s art collections, etc.)

I'll accept your offer, as of Sept 22nd letter, in this sense: as your $800 'grant' is only offering about HALF the film rentals, let it be understood that I extend this gift (the other half of those rentals) and graciousness to The Museum of Modern Art Film Dept. for the last time. Okay then, you can have the films ("Songs" too, for the price quoted): and I'll appreciate your 'grant': but do you see how all such terms as 'grant', 'honorarium', etc., DO reduce the artists to the meanest kind of haggling in sheer desperation? It is the museums who HAVE made the artist "a merchant bargaining his wares" and made of themselves the cruelest kind of cornerer-of-the-market -- all under the subterfuge of 'grant', etc. Every artist I know reads 'honorarium' as 'they're not going to pay me'. If you 'grant' to me, perchance, covered the full rentals of what you want to use, then I'd not care WHAT you call it: but it does, in fact, read 'cheat': I take the curse off that, for both you and me, by making it (the unpaid-for half) a gift -- and let's let it go at that ... tho' it's YOUR turn now, next time around, to think of something better -- whenever, later, you may call on me again.

You needn't worry that I'll mention any of these matters from your stage on the occasion of that opening: I know how fragile aesthetic consideration is; and I would never upstage the possibilities of art by old social talk: but I DO intend, wherever appropriate, to nail this museum subterfuge DOWN -- right thru the heart ... as the movies taught me -- Selah!, etc.

"Songs"'ll come your way soon as we get your check.

Stan Brakhage

The Museum of Modern Art
11 W 53rd Street,
NY, NY 10019
October 12, 1970

Dear Stan:

You have taken a stand on principle, and so shall I.

I do not accept your "gift," because I think museums should not be supported by artists. We do not pay rentals on principle, but I believe artists should be paid for their work. I offered you payment for appearing at the Museum hoping you would understand our position. I now withdraw that offer, but I will buy the Songs, if you wish to sell them at the price you quoted, $1,200. Please let me know if you still wish to sell them at that price.

I have no wish to exploit you by showing your films. I assume you know that we charge no admission to film showings. I assume you also know that no place else in New York shows your work. I would imagine that you are aware that we want to show your work because we believe it to be important, not because we think there is a big audience for it.

But life is far too short, and my days are too full, to engage in the kind of dialogue you seem to need. When we can afford it, we hope to buy many more of your films, at your price, but I have told Adrienne that I will not be put in the position you wish to put me in. There will be no Brakhage retrospective at the Museum at this time.

Sincerely,

Willard

The Museum of Modern Art
11 W 53rd Street,
NY, NY 10019
October 17, 1970

Dear Stan:

Adrienne has told me of your phone call. My secretary said you had called and said you were contrite.

I did not return the call, Stan, because I feel you should not apologize. The issue is clear; we are offering you a retrospective of your films, with a personal appearance here. For that we will pay 800.00 We cannot pay rental for your films. If you feel you must have film rental, then we are obliged to say, "sorry, no show." If you feel the fee is too low, then again we will be forced to bow out. It is the largest fee ever paid by the Museum to anyone for a personal appearance but that is not the point, either you accept it or reject it. In either case there will be no hard feelings on our part.

We are trying to do the best we can for the artist in all media. We would like to do better, and in all frankness it is the pushing of artists such as you who will help us to do more as time goes on. We all want to show important work. We want to advance the cause of the artist, and if we do not move ahead as rapidly as we should, sometimes it is because of lethargy but more often it is because of paucity of means. In any case I do not resent your shoving. I do resent a lack of trust and an assumption that we are exploiters. Our audience stays away when we show the work of artists of your calibre. Some of them even complain. But we do what we believe in.

If you feel that you want to show your work on the best terms we can offer you, we will welcome the opportunity to work with you. If you want to sell us some of your work, we have 1200.00 to spend. In any case, since I am now going to Europe (incidentally, to talk and show some of my films, with no fee and no rental), please work out the details with Adrienne and Larry.

Sincerely,

Willard Van Dyke

Box #6
Rollinsville, Colorado 80474
October 21, 1970

Dear Willard,

I accept the grant of $800.00 in exchange for a retrospective and personal appearance at The Museum of Modern Art: let there be peace between us on this matter.

I did not mean to imply in my previous letter that you personally and/or The Museum of Modern Art particularly were "exploiters". I am sorry my letter conveyed that insulting mistake: let the blame be upon my cumbersome writing.

I had meant to demonstrate that The System (of "grants", "honorariums", etc.) as practiced by ALL museums, most institutes, and many colleges and universities as well, does amount to an exploitation of The Artist: perhaps that was a bad choice of word: "depletion" would have been a better term, for what concerns me in these exchanges is, "depletion of The Artist" as, say, "Natural Resource" in this society. I see, and have for many years seen, Artists cut-off from the rest of society simply because they were not permitted, as Artists, to make a living within it: this is, in my opinion, the MOST serious destruction of Natural Resource that The United States has perpetrated. The according of Honors to The Arts seems to increase the estrangement of the living American Artist from the rest of society: there is no REAL place within The Nation, no leverage, no hope except an economic one: when Art is, in The United States, declared "priceless" it is in fact traditionally removed from the vital concerns of 'the living' and can only be then "honored" as such if it proceeds from some century of 'the dead'. It is culturally terrifying, to me, that U.S. Art Museums pay their janitors but only honor their Artists. We would, in my opinion, be much better off to honor our Janitors more, artists less, and pay each according to his needs of livelihood. Too many honors for The Arts makes the American Janitor rightfully outraged: he smells The Courts of Europe in that accordance and is estranged. Lack of payment to The Artist kills his work thru some slow starvation of the time necessary to it and estranges him from every paid worker in the community. I must fight this: but I was wrong to attempt to force you, or anyone, to adopt MY tactics with respect to 'grants', 'honorariums', etc.: my idea was simply to break the financial dead-lock by insisting upon full 'rentals': it is a simplistic idea, and fine as such: but you, who have to deal with the actualities of museum policy, politics, etc., have devised another method, altogether, and one which obviously is more immediately practical.

I was not intending to 'back down' on these issues when I tried to phone you: I was unaware, when I wrote, of your considerable accomplishments these last several months with respect to ALL film-makers: I was calling to tell you how misinformed my previous letter had been, to apologize for the 'tone' of that misinformation. You have apparently made a tremendous 'break thru' in terms of creating a system of at least SOME payment to ALL film-makers from now on (an accomplishment MUCH more important to me than that I should receive full "rentals" or whatever our previous argument was about); and you must have struggled against almost impossible odds to achieve that: I, simply, did not know about it (and thought you had only managed some 'token' payment to me ... and was admittedly too rude in my acceptance of that); otherwise, I would have included in my previous letter an immense CONGRATULATIONS to you for this achievement: I do so now: please accept it and forgive my previous lack of trust.

You are right to resent my "lack of trust": but then, I am a man so 'beaten' on so many levels of my living this whole last year, particularly, that I have become almost a human porcupine at my every turning: the quills were certainly not meant personally, tho' I'm sure they hurt all the same and must have been unbearable coming at a time when you had in fact fought-for and won some of the very 'rights' I was bitching about: I'm sorry: it was a farce having more to do with my lack of information than with any serious disagreement between us: it was a painful frace that we should have angrily crossed words on this matter at all: your life has always symbolized to me some exact opposite of "exploiter": if I suddenly (thus passionately) felt I couldn't trust you, I SHOULD have trusted poet Charles Olson's appropriate statement: "Men don't change: they simply stand more and more fully revealed."

But you, I'm sure, are not very well informed about my life either: I've lost a major work, give years in the making, this last year: I've lost my house, after seven years attempting to buy it, within the last three months: I've lost my freedom to just make films and have had to become now a teacher in order to survive and feed my children: and, as to "trust", you probably do not know that I resigned from The New York Film Museum (at a time when it was called Anthology Cinema) precisely because I found myself the only one on that board of directors who was insisting upon a substantial payment to film-makers, resigned so that I could fight and win (as I eventually did) that fight from the outside, threatening every kind of scandal that came into my head, and against the closest friends I thought I had on earth -- P. Adams (who is still refusing to speak to me), Jonas (without whose previous help in these matters of payment I would probably not have survived), both Peter Kubelka and James Broughton (who asked me, at the time, to give up my fight for ALL the film-makers, be 'diplomatic' as its called, and join with them more simply to get a higher salary for 'the board of directors'/us) and of course Ken Kelman (who showed a typical critics indifference to the physical survival of The Artist): "trust" comes difficultly after such a battle as that was, against one's 'trusted friends'.

I do not entirely trust myself, you see, inasmuch as I was tempted all along in this correspondence to simply accept the great honor of a retrospective at The Museum of Modern Art (a special 'dream' of mine for almost 18 years now) and give up my two-three years' absolute insistence upon payment to ALL film-makers: (I have been, you see, deeply hurt by my fight with The N.Y. Film Museum in this matter): but your accomplishment, Willard, in behalf of all, permits me to most happily (and unguiltily) accept my part of that benefit. I now think that The Museum of Modern Art Film Dept., and you especially, deserve PRAISE for managing to extend this payment, as does The N.Y. Film Museum as IT now stands. I'll continue, of course, to DAMN the others. Your efforts have now given me another hopeful example to hold up to the rest of the museums in this country and abroad: my special thanks for that.

I don't want to belabor you with any more of this matter: you must be far more exhausted than I, considering all your other duties: and I'll take up all further matters with Adrienne and Larry, as you suggest; but I would like to publish this correspondence between us: if you feel you cannot permit that, I will understand that it is because of your position as Director of The Film Dept., and I will not take it 'personally' at all: if your position permits you to extend this last favor, I will be very grateful inasmuch as publication of the FULL correspondence would be of great worth in my continued struggle with all other museums, institutes, etcetera: otherwise I will simply publish my side of the correspondence and trust that, at least with this letter, your difficulties, your patience, and your great accomplishments have been justly recognized.

Sincerely, blessings,

Stan Brakhage

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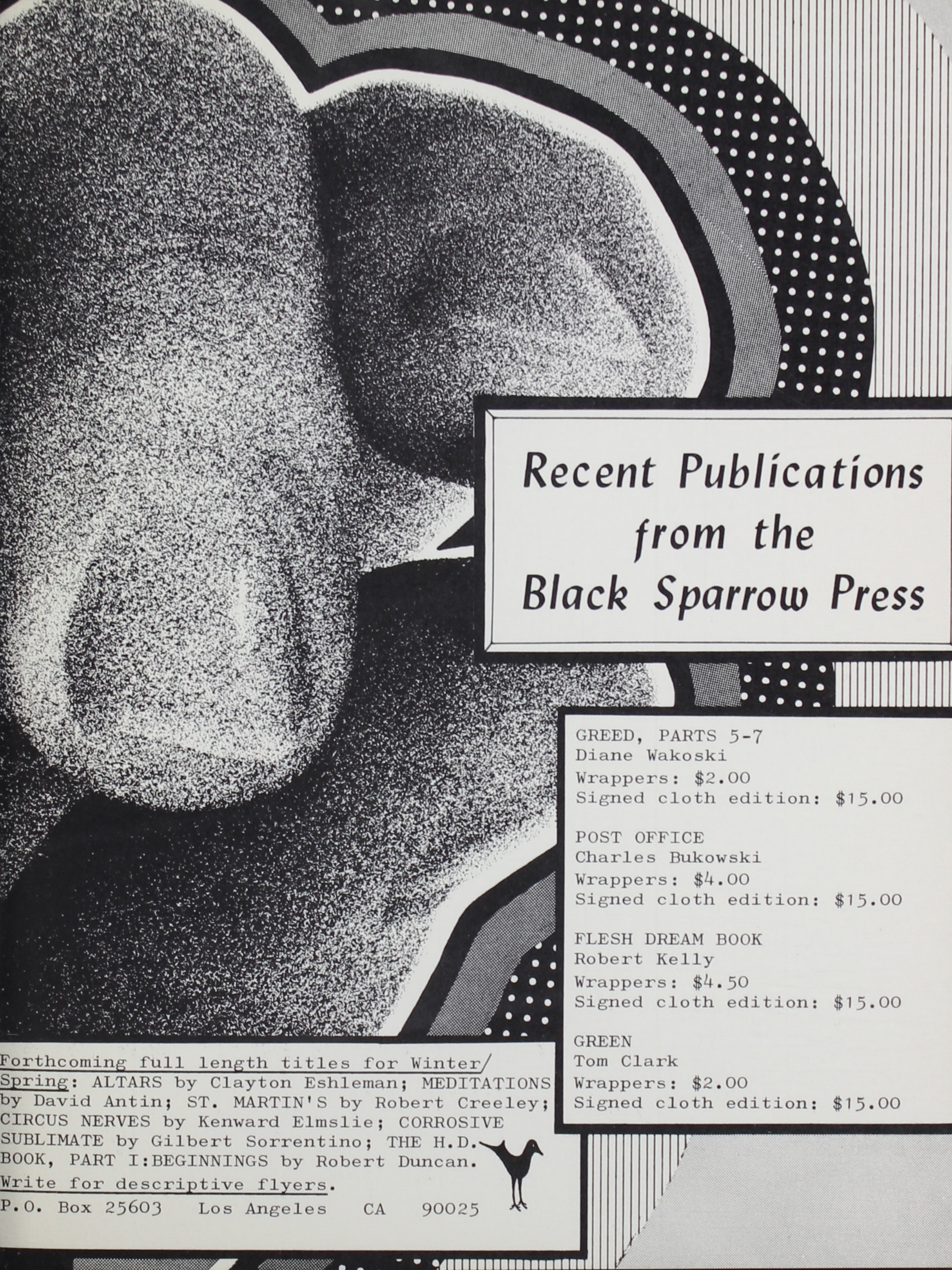

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